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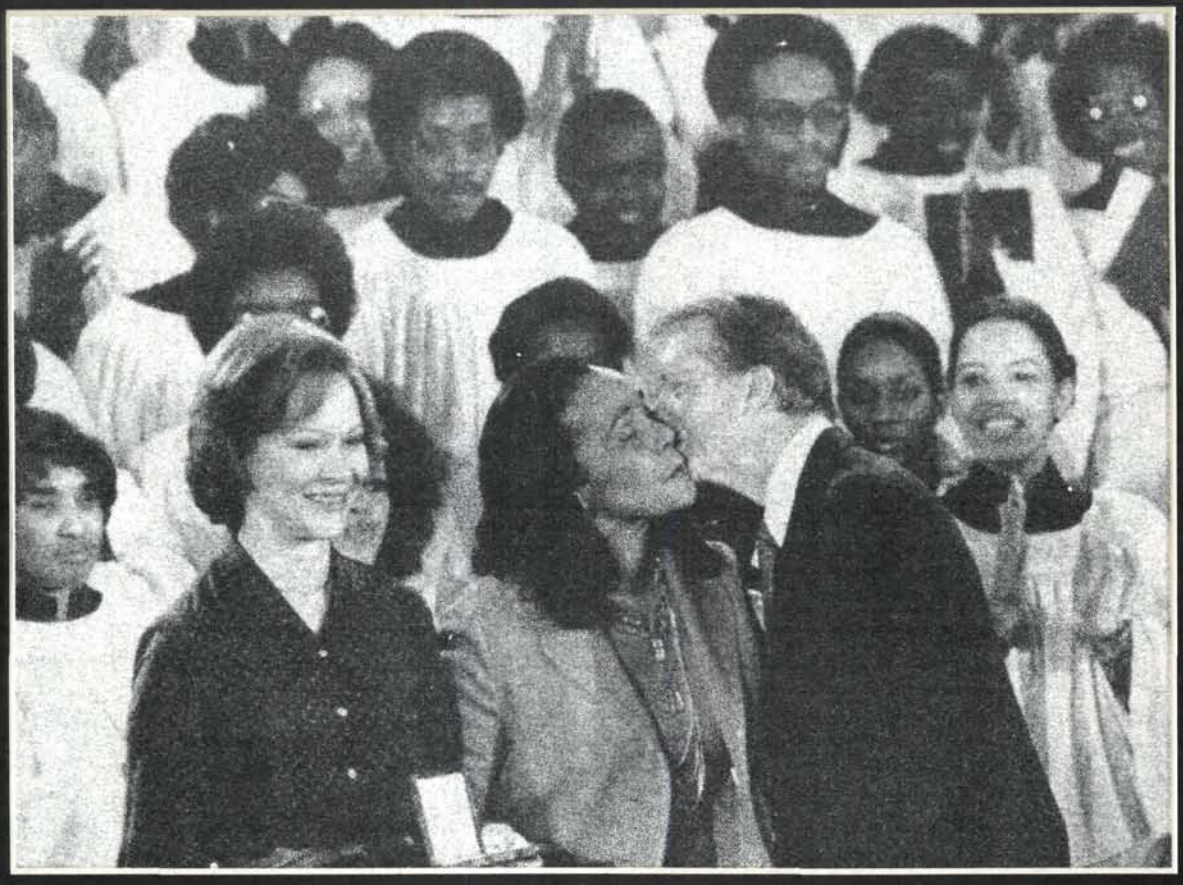
THE NEW REPUBLIC

January 27, 1979 Price One Dollar

Paul Sweezy on Inflation • Osborne on Booting Bella



'If I go to church on Sunday,
Break another promise Monday,
'T ain't nobody's business if I do.'

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TRB

from Washington
January 27, 1979

A Challenge to Nixon

The United States cannot come to terms with Richard Nixon. He will be back again in Washington next Monday (January 29) at the state dinner to honor diminutive Teng Hsiao-ping, vice premier of China, and in one way it will be historically appropriate that he is here. Teng is returning, in effect, the goodwill visit that Nixon made to Communist China in June 1972, an extraordinary visit in every way. Others have followed the path that Nixon opened, but he broke the ice, instituted the change in policy, even though he was the man who had built his life on discovering and excoriating communism. He had created such an impregnable reputation of hatred that he could not possibly be accused of softness. Nixon followed Peking with a week-long visit to Moscow in May. Hardly anybody will deny today that these were splendid services to America. If a Democrat had proposed them, or tried to improve relations with China and Russia, Nixon would have been at his jugular. His lifetime had given him the kind of immunity to such charges that a vaccinated person has in a pest house.

In another way it is appalling that Nixon is back in the White House. He is the only president in history to resign in disgrace; the man who from pride and character faults hurt fellow citizens in their most sensitive spot, the faith in an anointed leader in a sanctified office. Nixon comes back to Washington just after John Mitchell is released from jail. John Mitchell, the frozen-faced former senior law partner in Nixon's firm, and former attorney general, has lost his fortune, his reputation and his wife. Nixon brought destruction to everyone around him. Others went to prison; he got a "full, free and absolute pardon" from Jerry Ford, and cleaned up $600,000, among other windfalls, in giving his version of Watergate in TV interviews to David Frost while his White House staff was behind bars.

Nixon was in Washington a year ago when he and Jerry Ford attended the funeral of Nixon's old rival, Hubert Humphrey. Humphrey loved everybody; he was an extrovert; he had no enemies. The nation is proud of such a man. Nixon was almost deformed by his suspicions. "To this day," Bob Haldeman says in his book, *The Ends of Power*, "he doesn't know how many children I have, or anything else about my private life; he never asked. . . ." This from Haldeman, the puritanical and self-righteous chief of staff, who gave total loyalty.

Others give hints of Nixon's instability. William Safire's *Before the Fall* tells how, on the night of May 8 and early morning on May 9, 1970, when Nixon had unilaterally decided to "clean out the sanctuaries" in Cambodia, he seemed to be suffering a kind of sleepless, compulsive nightmare, making 50 or more telephone calls between 10 p.m. and 4:22 a.m., and then riding out to the Lincoln Memorial at dawn to argue with young people who had come to Washington to protest Vietnam and the killing of students by the national guard at Kent State.

America doesn't know what to do with a deposed president. Nixon has given us a legend that will last through history. He is one of the few American characters fit for a Shakespearean drama. He is like one of those half-believable 14th-century princes whom Barbara Tuchman writes about in her book, *A Distant Mirror*. They are gaudy and gory and larger-than-life, and they appeared because their era was suffering demoralization. And in the United States, too, there were turmoil and riots; Nixon formed his own secret White House intelligence squad because he felt besieged, with the nation in danger, and tapped wires freely—columnist Joseph Kraft was one victim.

So now Nixon is back again, and wants something. He has something to sell—something precious politically and he could ask a high price for it, not in dollars but in psychic pay. What he wants is to be recognized, to stop being the nonperson of San Clemente, to be made respectable (at least a bit) and perhaps even become an elder statesman like other ex-presidents. Yes, and he wants to have his services remembered by the public, and there were services as well as betrayals. The man who rode to power by setting his sails to the great hysterical red hunt of the 1950s, and who introduced a new political attack style with which he knocked out Jerry Voorhis and Helen Gahagan Douglas in California, wants a better image. His contributions? Well, he did open the way to normalizing relations with China (which Carter is now following up), and also with Russia. He did institute SALT talks in 1970 and, from his impregnable position of tough-on-communism, he signed two agreements with Andrei Gromyko, limiting offensive and defensive nuclear weapons.

Nobody charged that Nixon was undermining America's prestige by such action. They are today. I note a column by George F. Will in last week's *Newsweek*, beginning lugubriously, "When, as lately, America's decline accelerates, it is useful to look back along the downward crumbling path." Will approvingly quotes Eugene Rostow, former undersecretary of state, who sees a kind of decline-and-fall of America going on and who demands why we are yielding so cravenly. "The answer is fear," Will quotes Rostow as writing: "The American political class is afraid of living with the evidence of reality. . . ." What reality? Why, the militancy of Moscow, of course. I believe that anti-Russian suspicion is indeed growing in the United States, and that this is a sample. Columnist Will sums up its American political class: their "failure is not of intelligence but will."

We had will in Nixon's day, all right, and Lyndon Johnson's. It cost us inflation and some 50,000 lives in Vietnam. Senate hardliners look back "along the downward crumbling path" and wonder where we went soft.

That's where Richard Nixon comes in. When Chinese leader Teng visits Washington, Nixon is politely invited. He gives the occasion bipartisanship. If he wanted to he could play a big role in SALT. He started it, didn't he? I doubt whether the treaty can be ratified in any case: it must jump the hurdle bequeathed by the founding fathers, the two-thirds Senate vote requirement. In a Congress of 535, only 34 senators can veto it. Will Ford support SALT? Will Kissinger? Will Senate minority leader Baker? Baker wants to be president and if he votes "aye" he almost certainly can't get the GOP nomination. And finally, how about Nixon? If he endorsed SALT it would be a cause of grudging admiration to some for this strange figure.

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AMERICAN INCOME LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY of INDIANA

Serving America's Union Families

Comparative Financial Review

	Years ended December 31, 1977	1976
Income		
Life premiums	$22,340,297	$16,150,742
Accident and health premiums	25,683,413	23,593,214
Investment and other income	4,799,481	4,090,525
Total income	52,823,191	43,834,481
Benefits and expenses		
Life claims and other benefits	4,126,231	3,735,055
Accident and health claims	12,430,024	11,644,002
Increase in liability for future policy benefits	12,196,239	8,711,984
Amortization of policy acquisition costs	5,183,133	4,431,061
Commissions	5,943,151	5,224,771
General expenses and insurance taxes	5,869,697	5,652,642
Dividends to policyholders	298,064	299,032
	46,046,539	39,698,547
Income before income taxes and realized investment gains (losses)	6,776,652	4,135,934
Provision for income taxes		
Current	—	—
Deferred	1,909,150	1,209,252
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	4,867,502	2,926,682
Realized investment gains (losses)	11,364	356,057
Net income	$ 4,878,866	$ 3,282,739
Earnings per share		
Income before realized investment gains (losses)	$ 2.88	$ 1.76
Realized investment gains (losses)	.01	.21
Net income	$ 2.89	$ 1.97

Assets	$116,000,000
Insurance in Force	$1,289,599,000

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Cover: President Carter at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Sunday, January 14-after receiving the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Prize from Coretta Scott King. Photo by Darryl Hiekes for UPI. Lyrics from "'T Ain't Nobody's Biz-ness if I Do," words and music by Porter Grainger and Everett Robbins. Copyright © 1922 by MCA Music, a division of MCA, Inc. Copyright renewed. Used by permission, all rights reserved. Article by Ken Bode on page 12.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

January 27, 1979

Neighborhood Improvement

The most visible foreign policy tasks facing the Carter administration are not easy. Managing US-Soviet relations, trying to bring peace in the Middle East and southern Africa, maintaining stability in the Persian Gulf, pursuing US interests in Asia—they all require vision, courage and persistent attention by the president and his key advisers. But what may be the most intellectually challenging of all problems facing this administration is not one of these best known ones. It is that of building a new relationship with Mexico. We are afraid that this task still is not getting the highest-level attention—creative, sensitive attention—that it deserves. President Carter is scheduled to travel to Mexico next month and position papers are flying around in the government, but we see no evidence that the president, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski are thinking about what Carter should do during that trip. They have done nothing to help Americans and Mexicans to begin thinking in new ways about each other and about their mutual concerns. Instead, they seem to be allowing congressional committees, labor unions, the Immigration Service and the Department of Energy to exacerbate the same old frictions that historically have characterized the US-Mexican relationship.

That relationship has been one of imperialism, exploitation and contempt, on the US side, and resentment, envy and feelings of inferiority, on the Mexican side. The United States stole half of Mexico's territory 130 years ago. It has used Mexico's cheap labor and its resources, but has refused to show respect toward Mexicans or toward Mexico as a nation. Mexico has been well taught to fear US domination. Developing a stiff pride almost as a defense mechanism, it has been willing to remain a poor country rather than allow free entry to US investment. It's too bad that the United States has waited until now to realize that things should change. They *will* change now, and the US government should insure that they change for the better.

What makes change inevitable is Mexico's petroleum bonanza. Last summer, when *TNR* took a hand in revealing the extent and implications of Mexican oil ("Oil of Olé," *TNR*, August 19), the Mexican government officially estimated its "proved" reserves at 16 billion barrels and "probable" reserves at 31 billion, for a total of 47 billion. Unofficial estimates of "potential" reserves were 200 billion, bigger than Saudi Arabia's 150 billion. Discoveries and new estimates have been escalating so fast that the latest official Mexican figures put "proved plus probable" reserves at 84 billion, and the unofficial estimate for "potential" is 300 billion—not just larger than Saudi Arabia's pool, but double it. Plainly, Mexico isn't going to be a poor, weak neighbor to the United States for much longer. It is going to be important to us and to the world, and we are going to have to treat it as such.

The administration has wisely resisted the temptation to react toward Mexican oil like Sidney

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Greenstreet and Peter Lorre in the presence of the Maltese Falcon—with a gasp and a grab. Mexican oil does offer the US opportunities worth gasping about: independence from the Arabs, downward pressure on OPEC prices, postponement of the day when world energy demand outstrips supply and prices skyrocket. The advantages of large, secure, nearby new supplies are especially evident in view of Iran's oil cutoff and fears of instability elsewhere in the Persian Gulf.

It is important to make sure that Mexico does not go the way of Iran. The first priorities of US policy toward Mexico must be to guarantee that the nation to our south is (1) friendly and (2) stable. At the moment, that situation prevails. President Jose Lopez-Portillo tends to be pro-US and to favor development and increased oil production. He does have opposition, though, from leftists who want to deny petroleum to the *gringos* at whatever costs, and from rightists who want to delay development so as not to arouse Mexico's poverty-numbed masses. Lopez-Portillo is secure in office until 1982, but unwise US policies could affect the selection of his successor. Or, worse, too-fast development could produce the corruption, social dislocation, inflation and class enmity that led to a revolution in Iran. If the Mexicans perceived the United States as responsible for their troubles—as they are all too ready to do, given our mutual history—it would be a disaster.

President Carter's task is a delicate one. He has to encourage continued growth in Mexican oil production without either trying to force it or even, really, seeming too eager for it. So far, though, the administration has been acting so un-eager that it's almost insulting to the Mexicans. Much of Mexico's petroleum reserves consists of natural gas. Last year Mexico's state-owned oil company, PEMEX, closed a deal to sell gas to six US pipeline companies, but Energy Secretary James Schlesinger stopped the transaction on grounds that the price—$2.60 per thousand cubic feet—was higher than that of gas the US is buying from Canada at $2.16 and higher than prices the administration wanted to get Congress to write into national energy legislation. Because of Schlesinger's action, the US Export-Import Bank refused a planned loan to Mexico to finance the purchase (in the US) of pipelines to transport natural gas from wells to the American border.

The Mexicans were offended at US behavior. They got Japanese and European money to finance pipelines inside Mexico, and they set about trying to convert industries, even city buses, to run on natural gas. Right now they are just flaring away half a trillion cubic feet of gas per day, wasting the fuel and the money it could earn in order to hold to their stand on pricing. It is a stubborn and stupid thing to do, but the US is being just as stubborn. Schlesinger continues to insist that the US will not pay OPEC-level prices for natural gas, now about three dollars per thousand cubic feet, when domestic gas is in glut at two dollars. But Schlesinger also wants to build a 4800-mile pipeline from Alaska to Illinois that will deliver gas at five dollars per thousand cubic feet.

Correction

Several numerical errors appeared in the inflation chart on page 11 of the January 20 issue. The percentage decrease in nominal terms between 1967 and 1978 should have been 0.13 percent for the Yale University endowment and 1.4 percent for the University of Chicago endowment. The percentage decrease in real terms of the Harvard University endowment should have been 33 percent, and the increase of the University of Texas, 5 percent.

This episode is a miniature of old-style US-Mexican relations. The US is haughtily assuming that Mexico has nowhere else to go with its gas, and eventually will have to come to us with it, at our price. Mexico, even our friend Lopez-Portillo, is saying it is damned if it will do what the US wants and will burn the stuff away rather than submit. Obviously there's got to be a compromise here, and President Carter should try to set one in motion when he goes to Mexico next month. He should also offer US help—perhaps in consortium with other potential purchasers of Mexican oil—to help Mexico with industrial and rural development and with alternate fuel projects so that Mexico is secure even when its oil runs out.

Besides energy, there are two other important and ticklish questions affecting US-Mexican relations: immigration and trade. Pressured by overpopulation and underemployment, Mexico wants the US to act as its safety valve, accepting any and all who can make it to and across the Rio Grande. President Carter proposed legislation in the last Congress to limit the flow, but it didn't pass. Instead, Congress set up a two-year study commission on the problem. President Carter reportedly wants to defer any new action until the commission reports. That will make Mexico happy. But meanwhile, the Immigration and Naturalization Service is building new fences along the border, labor unions are calling for new crackdowns on illegal immigration and the House Population Committee called for "firm, hard sealing" of the border.

Similar tension situation exists concerning trade. The Carter administration reportedly wants to encourage new US-Mexican relations by offering concessions on imports of Mexican vegetables and textiles. But protectionist labor and business interests in the US are still thinking the old way and trying to keep "cheap goods" out.

Last August, *TNR* called for the administration to conduct a detailed study of US-Mexican relations, and we are glad that it did so. The document, Presidential Review Memorandum 41, incorporates many of the options we suggested at the time, including appointment of a special negotiator for Mexican affairs. Two broad approaches to Mexico apparently were outlined

(continued on page 9)

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Correspondence

The economics of appeasement

To the editors:

The poo-pooing of the impact of oil prices on inflation by a respected economist is disturbing but the real shock to me came when Professor Singer relegated to "persistent myth" the truism that a $45-billion contribution to foreign oil suppliers is hurting our economy ("OPEC's Price Reduction," *TNR*, January 6).

We are asked to believe that the largest trade deficit in American history is unimportant. We are told that the balance of trade deficit prompted by imported oil purchases has little impact because much of the money "comes back into the United States." True, as far as it goes, but that's like telling the captain of the Titanic that there are lots of icebergs in the North Atlantic but—not to worry—they all melt eventually.

Some of these petrodollars are used to buy American goods and services but much of the money earned selling oil to the US is reinvested in our real estate. In effect, we are financing the purchase of a piece of America. The profits those investments earn go abroad. Some call it the "profit drain." To the appeasement of economists, it is another inconvenient reality to be ignored.

Never short on good news, they go on to assure us that we needn't worry about the supply of oil for the foreseeable future. If the Middle East doesn't work out, Mexico surely will. I can think back to the prophets who assured our fathers and grandfathers that the United States had unlimited supplies of cheap land, water and minerals. Somehow our destiny excused pollution and abuse. We are now paying for that facile advice.

Terrence L. Bracy
Department of Transportation
Washington, DC

To the editors:

T. Fred Singer's intent is to show how the oil companies will take care of us if we will only let them alone. As an economist I find his attitude intellectually insulting and as a concerned citizen I find it frightening.

Left alone, the giant oil companies will wield (as they already do) awesome economic and political power. If recent history teaches us anything, it teaches us that we cannot trust the manner in which this power is used. Singer's demagoguery about the laws of supply and demand seems especially irrelevant when applied to an industry that has been cartelized and controlled from within on an international scale for over 50 years. Adam Smith's "invisible hand" appears to be tied behind Milton Friedman's back. If Singer was really an economist he would know that collusion doth not competition make. And if collusion in pricing has not contributed significantly to inflation perhaps Singer would like to explain why most price increases throughout our economy are justified by citing either energy or labor costs. And labor can't take all the blame.

The tone of Singer's article is one of faith in the oil companies and hope that everything will be all right. This is ridiculous in an age when hardheaded pragmatism is needed to keep those companies honest.

Sam Edwin Shoaff
Portland, Maine

New breed of Democrats

To the editors:

Michael Barone's essay, "Nixon's Gift to the GOP," (*TNR*, December 16) is indeed helpful in explaining the dearth of quality Republican candidates in the recent past. His observations about the future seem valid as well, but he draws back from perhaps the most significant inference of his study: what will be the implication over time of all of these upper-middle-class, college educated leaders in the Democratic party. Since, according to Barone, they were brought into the Democratic party because of the tensions or cross pressures of Vietnam and perhaps Watergate, they certainly do not represent concerns long associated with the party's older leadership. To be interested in peace and civil liberties is commendable, but the reaction of some of these younger leaders to issues relating to national health and welfare indicates that they have brought into the Democratic party a faction of highly articulate and wealthy leaders who probably would have felt more comfortable with Grover Cleveland than Harry Truman. It may take a generation before the sorting out process ends and the parties find their own centers. In the meantime, the new breed of young and fiscally conservative Democrats may make it difficult for ardent partisans to stand by the party's candidates.

Martin Ridge
The Huntington Library
San Marino, California

Infant mortality statistics

To the editors:

TRB says this country's infant mortality rate "is the best argument I know for national health insurance" ("Quality of Life," *TNR*, January 6). In the preceding paragraph he notes that the Soviet Union, which has had a completely socialized national health insurance system for 60 years has almost twice the infant mortality rate of this country, but in TRB's peculiar calculus that is not an argument against national health insurance or socialized medicine. He cites "17 other nations" which are ahead of us, and mentions Hong Kong, Singapore and Iceland specifically. These three "nations" have an aggregate population of about seven million, so what sense does it make to compare them with a continental nation of 220 million such as the United States? Moreover Hong Kong and Singapore are overwhelmingly Chinese, and TRB does not seem to know that the infant mortality rate in this country among Chinese-Americans is typically half or less than half of the average American rate.

TRB neglects to mention that just since 1965 the United States infant mortality has declined almost 50 percent, monotonously setting new low records every year—all without national health insurance. Finally, TRB exaggerates the American infant mortality rate, putting it at 15 per thousand live births. It was 14 in 1977 and even lower in 1978.

Harry Schwartz
Scarsdale, New York

Cheap shots

To the editors:

As a long-time subscriber to *TNR* and as a Connecticut Democrat, I found myself to be deeply offended by M.P.'s gratuitous slurs against Senator Abraham Ribicoff ("Jerusalem Diarist," *TNR*, December 23 & 30).

To me, those remarks plus the insulting characterization of Abba Eban say more about M.P.'s character than they do about either Senator Ribicoff or Abba Eban, both of whom have long established positions as true friends of

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Israel and in the case of Mr. Eban as one of Israel's most eloquent and skillful diplomats. True, Senator Ribicoff voted for the arms sale package to Egypt, Saudi Arabia *and Israel*. There is room for honest disagreement on this issue but many believe its passage opened the way for Camp David. What could have been a moving personal tribute to Golda Meir was spoiled by M.P.'s unwarranted insults against Senator Ribicoff and Mr. Eban.

I can't help thinking that M.P. betrayed his friendship with Golda Meir by using this occasion for his cheap shots.

Daniel Lahn
West Hartford, Connecticut

Mr. Peretz replies:
With friends like Senator Ribicoff, Israel needs no enemies.

Marx's anti-semitism

To the editors:
Dealing with Marx's anti-semitism or Jefferson's racism is a little like trying to tie your shoes while walking; it's almost impossible to do it gracefully. Not so long ago Erich Fromm dismissed any references to Marx's anti-semitism as cold war propaganda. Jerrold Seigel, however, in his review of Saul Padover's *Karl Marx, an Intimate Biography* (*TNR*, January 6) does a better job. Like Wills discussing Jefferson, he takes the high ground. Arguing from high above the tree line of common sense, these men argue that the stain on their heroes is an accidental by-product of an intellectual system derived from the best of motives. In Seigel's case we are told that the discussion of the Jewish question should be seen in the light of the emerging theory of the stages of development, so that Jews, who were avaricious and greedy in the manner of modern capitalism, were actually closer to socialism than Christians, who had more generally retained pre-modern virtues, but were consequently more economically backward and thus further away from socialism. Granting the plausibility and even the correctness of Seigel's analysis we are still compelled to ask whether we can seal off the formal structure of the argument from the language in which it is expressed and the social context in which it was received.

The intensity and hammer-like quality of Marx's writing, familiar to anyone who has read the essay "On the Jewish Question," suggest a deep-seated emotional revulsion. And it is not adequate here to point out that Marx often had equally harsh things to say about Christians. To do so would be to ignore the fundamental asymmetry of their positions. There was no threat to Christian qua Christian life and limb. Moreover Marx could hardly have been unaware of the rabid anti-semitism of many of the earlier socialists like Fourier and Proudhon. What impact did he expect his rhetoric to have on them? Here one is reminded of Frederick Douglass's remark about slaveholders: "The cowskin makes as deep a gash in the flesh when wielded by a professed saint as it does when wielded by an open sinner."

In his most un-Marx like attempt to divorce Marx's intellectual constructs from the reality they were founded in, Seigel goes so far as to argue that the stage theory construct was the framework for all of Marx's anti-Jewish remarks. This is not even remotely plausible. Granted his overwhelming intellectual preoccupations, was Marx concerned with the stage theory when he attacked Joseph Moses Levy, a baptized English Jew? Writing in 1860, Marx, himself a baptized Jew, mocked Levy's attempts to be English and then went on: "But what good does it do Levy to attack Mr. Disraeli and put a Y for an I, for Mother Nature has written his pedigree in absurd block letters right in the middle of his face."

Mr. Seigel is surely correct in dismissing the ludicrous arguments which place Marx in the line of thinking which unfolds into the Nazis but he, and we younger Marxists in general, would similarly be well advised to try to come to grips with the lesser but nonetheless undismissable quality of Marx's Jew hatred.

Fred Siegel
State University of New York
New York, New York

Recombinant DNA

To the editors:
The James Watson opinion on recombinant DNA ("DNA Folly Continues," *TNR*, January 13) is illiberal, anti-environmental, and seems to me to be outdated –certainly in its venom and probably in its facts on regulation. This is a step down from his earlier contribution to *TNR* which was illiberal and anti-environmental, but somewhat timely.

Relaxed regulations have just been announced. I read in an environmentalist source, stated without disapproval, that no real obstructionists were allowed on the HEW panel. In the past two years, calmer scientists have provided persuasive argument and evidence that some of the original perceived risks can be safely discounted. To me, Watson seems to border on hysteria, considering the congenial discussions I've read elsewhere.

I do not have an opinion on the degree of recombinant DNA regulation which may be needed today. I do have an opinion that I would never trust Watson's judgments on any environmental-type issues. Can a perceptible risk of "infinite" consequences be justified by short-term gain? I think Watson would answer yes. My friends would answer no.

Rich Ulrich
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Junior birdmen

To the editors:
At the risk of committing a heresy severe enough for the Airline Owners and Pilots Association to send out someone to confiscate my membership card, I will agree to the principle of restricting light planes at airports intended primarily for scheduled air carriers ("Up in the Air, Junior Birdmen," *TNR*, January 13).

I have an excellent reason for not landing at them: abject terror at the prospect of coming down a glide slope immediately behind a heavy jet. Nevertheless, I have found myself in the Cessna waiting in line for takeoff with fully-loaded 727s and larger stacked behind me, feeling just as guilty as *TNR* says I should.

Why was I being so selfish? Why did I not safely and sensibly land at the just-as-convenient, friendly, general-aviation airport whose short, narrow runways are just right for the silly tricycle landing gear of my rented, nonessential Cessna? I'd have loved to. However, it had just been turned into a shopping center, and as sharp as I am at short-field landings, I don't think I can put her down on top of a K-Mart.

The overlooked critical issue in the post-San Diego airport safety debate is the preservation of privately-owned small-plane urban airfields. The Feds have chosen not to make it their business, and few local governments show any interest. As the small private

(continued on page 40)

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in PRM-41: continuing to treat it as a mere "emerging power" in the third world, or promoting it in our eyes to a world-scale partner of the United States. President Carter, who studies Spanish in his spare time, appears to favor true partnership over more patronizing, and we concur in that. But changing to a better policy will take great diplomatic skill and domestic political finesse of a high order. Carter has to set in motion a process by which people learn to think and act in a different way about one another. The evidence is all around that the old ways are hard to shake.

Not the Last of Bella

The last time Bella was defeated in a New York election, she told the press, "I'll thank you not to write my obituary." It turns out she was right. Jimmy Carter had a few lines to add. The president's senior staff obviously thinks that it is a political plus to have fired Bella, and they've admitted as much. You can almost hear the glee midst the good old boys at the gas stations, pool halls and barber shops: "Whooee! Carter booted Bella!" That's the reaction they're counting on at the White House. You know that the political mileage came from canning Bella, because why else wasn't the other co-chairman, Carmen Votaw, also dismissed?

The president's inner circle may be right in its political calculations, but the merits of the case are on Bella's side. She was appointed to head a national advisory committee on women. All the attention has gone to the four-page press release prepared by the commission before its meeting with President Carter, and not nearly enough to the 10-page report it laid on Carter's desk last week. It is a detailed and thoughtful analysis of the president's inflation program and his budget and how they affect women. Of the 16 million Americans living below the poverty line, two-thirds are women. Half the unemployed are women. Of women who work, 80 percent are clustered at the bottom of the pay scale. Women average 60 cents for every dollar earned by men, and that gap has not changed in 20 years.

The report reminded President Carter of his pledge to do for women's rights what Lyndon Johnson did for civil rights. Its tone was critical, because the commission believes that cuts in jobs, education, welfare and health will fall most heavily on women. Reportedly President Carter was told all that by Bella and reportedly he replied, "I guess you're right." The report also explains to the president why this commission has an interest in national policy beyond those issues traditionally defined as women's issues. No one told these 40 women that they'd been appointed merely to go along with whatever the administration decided to do. If that was a condition of signing on, they should have been warned in advance.

Come to think of it, the politics aren't all on Jimmy Carter's side either. The issues in this report aren't on the national agenda for two or four years—they're on until they get solved. Raucus as Bella is, she has a cadre of solid supporters in the women's movement, and this episode just increases their ranks and certifies her leadership. That will be important when the Democratic primaries begin to roll around. Thanks to Jimmy Carter, Bella is still the lady who needs no last name. And it's still not time to write her political obituary.

White House Watch

Booting Bella

"And now," Jimmy Carter said at the White House last March 22, "I would like to take the opportunity as a great honor for myself to introduce to you my friend and a great chairman, Bella Abzug." The occasion was the presentation to him of a belated report on the National Women's Conference which had been financed with a five-million-dollar federal appropriation and had met at Houston, Texas, on November 18-21, 1977. The President's wife Rosalynn, their daughter-in-law Judy Carter, and his assistant for public liaison, Margaret (Midge) Costanza, had attended. Carter said the conference could have been a disaster of contention but "under the superb leadership of Bella Abzug . . . was a complete success." He praised the "national plan" of public and private action in behalf of women that the conference had adopted, committed himself and his Cabinet and his "official and personal family" to "keeping the spirit of Houston alive," and said he would "establish a continuing committee of women . . . to work intimately with the Cabinet officers, the agency heads, the White House staff and me, personally, to be sure that the superb work that you did at Houston . . . will be implemented completely."

On April 4 Carter issued an executive order "establishing a National Advisory Committee for Women." The order said "the committee shall advise the President on a regular basis of initiatives needed to promote full equality for American women" and "shall assist in reviewing the applicability of such initiatives . . . to particular programs and policies." It all seemed bright and promising, but already the seeds of trouble were planted. Midge Costanza, who by then was in

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disfavor with the President and such staff powers as Hamilton Jordan and Press Secretary Jody Powell and within months would be harried out of the White House, had overseen the drafting of the executive order and was compiling a list of prospective appointees to the committee. The enterprise was associated with her in the minds of White House assistants who disliked her or at best felt dispassionately that she was not suited to mobilization of the support the President and his programs needed. Anne Wexler, an experienced Democratic party tactician, was about to take over Midge's title and most of her responsibilities.

The makings of more trouble emerged in arguments over the composition of the committee. The order said "the President shall designate one member to chair the committee." Powell, Wexler and domestic adviser Stuart Eizenstat urged the President to appoint former congresswoman Bella Abzug of New York, who had been defeated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan for the Democratic nomination to the Senate in 1976. She campaigned for Carter after he was nominated (though not in the pre-convention primaries) and, as she had demonstrated in Houston, she had a formidable following among women. These factors seemed to Powell, Wexler and Eizenstat to make Abzug a political asset and to outweigh her talent for offending many people, women included, with her abrasive talk and manner. Rosalynn and Judy Carter differed. They had not liked what they saw of Bella in Houston. It's said at the White House that Judy, a fervent feminist and the wife of the President's older son Jack, felt with special intensity that Jimmy Carter and Abzug would never get along and that under her the committee would never be the basically friendly and cooperative critic and stimulator that the President expected. Rosalynn so advised Jimmy. He compromised. On June 20 he announced the appointment of 40 members including two "co-chairs" and an "honorary chair." ("Chairwoman" was out, naturally.) The co-chairs were Bella Abzug and Carmen Delgado Votaw, a Puerto Rican feminist who heads the Inter-American Commission on Women. The honorary chair was (and is) Judy Carter. She is never mentioned in official accounts of how the committee functioned. Carmen Votaw is described at the White House as a personable and eloquent advocate of women's causes who was no match for Bella Abzug. "Nobody is," a Carter assistant said after Bella was fired and Votaw quit in protest on January 12.

By White House account—and this report is intended to summarize and clarify the White House account—Bella dominated the committee and set its tone from the start. It was a slow start, stingily supported. Carter required federal agencies, mainly Labor and HEW as it turned out, to supply personnel and funds from their staffs and budgets. A White House directive put the committee in the Women's Bureau at the Labor Department and first authorized the equivalent of three full-time assistants and a total annual expenditure of $200,000. Co-Chair Abzug wangled five more assistants and got the expenditure limit raised to $300,000, including staff salaries. The President's budget office in effect forbade supplying agencies to replace personnel assigned to the committee. The committee acquired a staff director and its full complement of eight assistants, including three secretaries, only on November 1. Abzug, Votaw and other members got travel expenses and a daily expense allowance of $50 when they were in Washington on committee business. Many federal "per diem" allowances run up to $150.

The committee accomplished and produced very little, nearly everything it and its staff did irritated Carter assistants, and they ascribed most of the irritants to Bella. According to Carter people, a largely critical commentary upon a report by Carter to Congress on administration endeavors in behalf of women was Bella's work and was never cleared with the whole committee. A committee "update" of things done and not done to implement the Houston conference recommendations was similarly critical in overall tone and was similarly ascribed to Bella. Abzug was known to be jealous of Sarah Weddington, a sometime Texas lawyer who had been brought into the White House as Carter's chief assistant for women's affairs, and Abzug was suspected of doing all she could to undermine Weddington's standing with feminist leaders around the country. Weddington asked to meet with the committee November 15, the day it was to have its first meeting with Carter, and was told the committee wouldn't have time for her. Other White House assistants blamed Bella for that and for the committee's abrupt cancellation of the meeting with Carter because his schedulers had provided only 15 minutes for it. Bella actually argued against the cancellation. A letter telling Weddington to stay away from the preliminary meeting was signed by Co-Chair Votaw, not by Abzug. At the Democratic party's

Coming:

A Bureaucrat's Lament.

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Morton Kondracke on

The Lessons of Iran.

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midterm assembly in Memphis, Abzug infuriated Carter people by trying to organize a women's walkout in protest against the President's announced intention to increase defense expenditures. By January 12, the day the committee was to have its second scheduled and first accomplished meeting with the President, Hamilton Jordan and several other senior assistants were longing for an occasion to tell Carter that it was time to get rid of Bella. They got their reason, sufficient for them, late on the afternoon of January 11.

It was a committee press handout marked "for release Friday, January 12, 3 p.m.," after the scheduled meeting with Carter. It was headlined, "President Carter challenged on social priorities." It said the committee challenged him on many aspects of his program as it was projected in the upcoming fiscal 1980 budget, ranging from increased defense expenditures to decreased or restricted expenditures for welfare, employment and other programs affecting women. In it was no acknowledgment that in action and rhetoric Carter had done and committed his administration to do more for women than previous presidents had. In it was no acknowledgment that Stuart Eizenstat and Suzanne Woolsey of the budget office had met with the committee on December 20, listened with sympathy to complaints about defense versus domestic priorities, and brought about some changes in line with the committee's views. It was a churlish whine (women in this egalitarian age will have to get used to being called churls) and Carter's people justifiably resented it.

They over-resented it. What else did they—Powell, Wexler and Eizenstat in particular—expect from a committee that according to them was dominated and fouled by Bella Abzug? Powell, who in normal course had received the committee handout from the Labor Department, showed it to Jordan and Gerald Rafshoon, the President's image engineer, at a 45th birthday party for Rafshoon in his office. At a routine fortnightly White House senior staff meeting the morning of the 12th, the handout was discussed. Nobody disputed the Powell-Jordan-Rafshoon argument that it was intolerable and that Carter should be advised to get rid of Abzug. Carter sometimes attends these staff meetings. He did not attend this one. Jordan informed him of the staff consensus and showed him the offensive handout after the meeting. Carter read the handout and agreed with Jordan that it probably was time to dismiss Abzug. Richard Moe, Vice President Mondale's staff chief, was in and out of the meeting. He told the Vice President about the White House consensus and Mondale was told before Carter met with the committee at 2:30 p.m. that the President was inclined to ask Abzug to resign. Mondale did not dissent.

At the meeting with Carter, Abzug opened the

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discussion with a harsh summary of the points that were set forth in the committee press release. The points were elaborated in a 10-page, typed statement that she handed to the President in a closed envelope. Carter put the envelope aside and didn't open it during the meeting. Sarah Weddington and Anne Wexler, who were present with Stuart Eizenstat, were appalled by the harshness of Bella's opening statement and its obvious effect on Carter. They realized that it was the only way Bella knew how to talk but they regretted it. Wexler and Weddington were pleased and relieved by following statements by five committee members. Carmen Votaw's plea that the President reconsider his stand against federally financed abortions was thought to be especially eloquent. Carter's calm hearing of it and of other criticisms seemed to validate his claim, which he expressed to the committee after the members had finished and restated at a press conference on January 17, that he expected and welcomed criticism. He said then and at the press conference that he did not expect or welcome the sort of adversary confrontation that the committee press release reflected and that the committee under Abzug's leadership seemed to him to practice. He looked occasionally at Bella when he was saying this to the committee. He appeared to his people to be saying to the whole committee that he and the members would be better off without Abzug. She concluded the meeting with a rejoinder, to the effect that the committee was an independent body which had a right and duty to criticize Carter and his policies. The rejoinder was crudely put, in her usual style, and did not improve matters. Weddington, Wexler and Eizenstat told other White House assistants that the group stood and applauded Carter when he left the room. He had spent twice the scheduled 30 minutes with the committee.

Jordan asked the President after the meeting whether the discussion had changed his mind about dismissing Bella. Carter said the discussion had confirmed his opinion that Bella had to go. Jordan told Votaw of the President's decision. She expressed surprise. So far as Jordan recalls, she did not protest. Unaware that Abzug was saying nice things about Carter and the meeting to reporters outside the White House, Jordan sent her a note asking her to come to his office. She did. White House Counsel Robert Lipshutz, whose mild manner is often mistaken by reporters for timidity, was with Jordan. Lipshutz and Jordan told Abzug that the President wanted her resignation, then and there. She argued and pleaded for 45 minutes. She said so often that they were making her "a scapegoat" for committee actions that Lipshutz in exasperation called her a liar and snarled that she'd be saying next that she was being fired because she is a Jew. Tough, proud and profane Bella Abzug begged to be kept in an unpaid position that is not her bag. Jordan and Lipshutz, dealing with a boor, made themselves and their President seem to be boors. Highly placed women in the administration soon were asking, why in God's name could Carter and his assistants not have let the January 12 confrontation pass and invited Abzug to resign in quiet decency? Maybe she wouldn't have, Bella being Bella. Carter and his minions would look better if they'd given her the chance.

John Osborne

And the Democratic party's dilemma.

Carter's Chosen Path

Presidential assistants are direct: "Like it or not, he's made a decision he's going to spend the next two years fighting inflation." That puts the president right in step with the American people. By far, according to the polls, inflation is the number one *problem* facing the country. The number one *issue* is what do we do about it. There will be sacrifices, no doubt about it. But how will the sacrifices be distributed?

In the past two months, beginning with the Democratic midterm conference in Memphis, continuing with the hammering out of the fiscal 1980 budget in Washington, and including Stuart Eizenstat's recent speech to the National Democratic Women's Club, the country has gotten a pretty fair idea of how this president intends to answer that question.

The best answer comes in the budget. The budgetary process is not symbolism or rhetoric. It is a hardnosed ordering of national priorities involving the reality of who supplies dollars to the federal government and who gets how many of these dollars back. The budget is entirely an executive document, unmuddled by Congress, the president's exclusive blueprint.

Jimmy Carter came to office on a promise to balance the federal budget by 1981. It's a promise he apparently intends to try to keep. After raising the $66-billion deficit he inherited from the Republicans by an additional $11 billion in the first budgetary go-round, Carter has chosen this year to begin to meet his pledge.

The budget process is always a series of skirmishes among competing interests. This time it was a process of program budgets slashed and then restored—but always to less than the original figure. The politics of the process indicates that Carter, the outsider, has mastered firmly the Washington insiders' game of budget making. But the process, however adept, cannot disguise the result. The budget for the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, the nearest thing to a federal jobs program, is still at half the level of last year. But in the famous 111-page Carter promise book, there

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in black and white on page three is a pledge to move CETA funding in the opposite direction.

This year's budget skirmishes were fought almost entirely between the president and other Democrats—with black and labor leaders over funds for housing, school lunches and welfare; with big city mayors over cuts in community development funds and the jobs program; with Senator Kennedy over health care; and with liberals and now women over the entire conservative thrust of the Carter economic program.

This budget permanently sets the tone of the Carter administration. Everyone knows that, or should. The administration is trying very hard to sugar-coat the pill. The president's address at Memphis, where Democratic liberals confronted Mr. Carter on the priorities of his budget, began to convey the bad news, but couched it in the uplifting language of hope. Speaking off the cuff to a workshop on inflation, Carter said, "When I make decisions about the 1980 budget, the question will be, 'Has Jimmy Carter been fair?' I can guarantee you that I'll do the best I can. If I do make a mistake, it will be on the side of those most dependent on government, the poor and the deprived and the disadvantaged."

The Carter budget now doesn't meet that guarantee. Instead, the budget expresses a redirection of Democratic goals. And Stuart Eizenstat's speech to the National Democratic Women's Club was an attempt to justify that redirection. Eizenstat once worked in the Lyndon Johnson White House, helping to draft the social programs of the Great Society. As President Carter's chief adviser on domestic policy, he is by far the most liberal member of the Carter inner circle. It was Eizenstat who led the fights against making the $30-billion deficit figure an administration totum. He was also against fighting the inflation battle entirely at the expense of domestic programs. With those battles lost, Eizenstat's speech was tinged with fatalism. "The 1970s is an era of constraints," Eizenstat said. "Every president must face the reality he inherits. . . . In an era of inflation, the collective demands of our country exceed our capacity to satisfy them. . . . This administration did not create the realities of this new era—it did not ask for them—but it must and will face and beat them lest they consume us all." And what of the Democrats' historic mission of helping the poor, the unemployed and members of minority groups? That mission must be "reshaped," and we must "prioritize" as never before. It sounds as if the Carter administration is beginning to borrow its phrasemaking from Jerry Brown. No thinking liberal can confront the 1980s without knowing that the era of government growth is over. But no one need assume that the decisions to fight inflation at the expense only of the most vulnerable domestic social programs is the product of some kind of historical inevitability. When the sugar coating is removed from the medicine, the sour taste is evident. President Carter has consciously begun to move the Democratic party away from nearly half a century of its own history.

Carter's emerging economic policy may be out of step with the traditional directions of the Democratic party, but it is completely in step with what has emerged as the president's personal philosophy. The new year has brought a spate of midterm appraisals of Jimmy Carter by columnists and other pundits. All have led more or less to a common conclusion about this man's politics: in political philosophy, he is more like a Republican than a Democrat. That assessment is likely to stick. This budget makes clear that Carter is following the advice of the famous Patrick Caddell memo: "We have an opportunity to co-opt many of [the Republicans'] issue positions and take away large chunks of their presidential coalition by the right actions in government. Unfortunately, it is those same actions that are likely to cause rumblings from the left of the Democratic Party."

Emmett John Hughes, an adviser and speechwriter for President Eisenhower, wrote in *Fortune Magazine* after a private interview in the Oval Office, ". . . this Democratic President brings to the mind of any legislator or journalist in Washington the remembered images of only Republican predecessors." To Hughes, Carter's view of his own presidency resembles most vividly that of Herbert Hoover. "Not surprisingly, [Carter] ventured no notions in economic philosophy to which the earlier President could have taken serious exception—nor any regretful longings for a social program abandoned for the sake of the battles against inflation, deficit, waste and bureaucracy."

The Carter economic program may or may not work. Carter's political future probably depends on the outcome—whatever people may feel about the program philosophically. If it does work—if, as some economists think, Carter's moves to stop the slide of the dollar will lop two or three points off inflation, the tight budget also will reduce inflationary pressure, and as a result the annual rate falls to six percent by the end of 1979—then the president's standings in the polls will certainly turn around. If it doesn't work—if, as other economists believe, the budget cuts are too small to be more than politically symbolic in an economy of $2.2 trillion—then we'll probably have both inflation and recession by the end of the year, which will be equally consequential in the politics of 1980.

It is time for the Democratic party to take a hard look at Jimmy Carter. When he was nominated, he was an uncertain, untested commodity. That is no longer true. The president and his advisers reveal themselves to be the most dedicated poll watchers in the history of the Oval Office. Now they are convinced by the polls that the road to reelection lies in holding the middle class and the independent voter, and that road is paved with pledges to control inflation by eliminating government waste and cutting spending—all except defense spending, which is palatable. They are also convinced by the

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results of the 1978 congressional elections that there is a "Carter consensus" in the country.

Jimmy Carter's current economic policies put him out of step with his party, with its platform and with his own promises of 1976. The same polls that show President Carter trailing Senator Edward Kennedy among Democrats show that support for the president's budget priorities is lowest among the traditional elements of the Democratic rank-and-file—among blacks, trade unionists, low income and big city voters. Carter undoubtedly understands that his economic program imperils his traditional Democratic base, and he has decided to take that chance. But that base can still be crucial, in the contest for the nomination even more than in the general election.

How would it have affected Jimmy Carter in his quest for the Democratic nomination in 1976 if he'd told the voters he intended to cut funds for CETA, housing, community development, education and health; to sign a bill deregulating natural gas; to postpone federalization of welfare and put off national health insurance; all the while increasing defense spending by 20 percent in his first two budgets?

Liberal Democratic leaders have begun to ask themselves whether Gerald Ford would have been able to get the natural gas deregulation compromise through a two-to-one Democratic Congress. They tend to think not. When common situs picketing was defeated early in the first session of the last Congress, Republicans around the country credited Carter: "I don't know whether he killed it or just let it die," one said. "Either way is all right with me." If you are going to have a Republican in the White House, it makes some sense to have one there who owns up to being a Republican.

After Watergate, political scientists criticized the Republican party for its "failure to play a role as an agency by which the President might be held accountable." Cut through the academic gobbledygook and that means that a president's first responsibility is to the party that nominated him, and, conversely, that the party is obliged to assess his stewardship when the time comes around for renomination. One of Stuart Eizenstat's major points in his speech was that the institution of the presidency has been eroded by Vietnam and Watergate. An important feature of that view is that no president is now considered automatically entitled to renomination. There need be no issue as grave as Vietnam. The expanded number of primaries and open caucuses make it possible to mount a challenge to a sitting president based on the philosophies underpinning his policymaking. Ronald Reagan proved that.

President Carter should be tested within his own party in 1980. With his budget, his domestic priorities, and his new "era of constraints" rhetoric, he has defined the terms of that test. Democrats must understand that to renominate Jimmy Carter is to commit the Democratic party to the course he charts in domestic social policy. A president with the will to redirect a political party probably has the power to accomplish his ends if that party gives him the time to work that will.

Ken Bode

Both the oil-rich and the oil-poor can ruin the New York banks.

The Bankers' Dilemma

When bankers begin talking of "holocaust scenarios," as they have been lately, it is time for the rest of us to pay attention. The problem seems to be that the American banks have loaned $37.7 billion which will probably not be repaid. Default on this much money would bust the banks which in turn would bust the country which in turn would bust the world.

The $37.7 billion is the amount of unguaranteed loans by American banks outstanding to poor countries that do not produce oil. It seems fairly unlikely that these loans will be repaid. The loans are not legally enforceable since the debtor is a sovereign state. No court has any jurisdiction over Zaire. Can an American bank, under its state law, take depositors' funds and make a loan that is not legally enforceable? It was a good question.

David Rockefeller is a famous world traveler. With his retinue he goes to foreign capitals where he is treated as a visiting head of state. The best silver is brought out and he is wined and dined as befits his station. He may be better than a head of state because he has money. Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan Bank has loaned $4.2 billion to the LDCs (for "less developed countries," which is the current euphemism). What do the LDCs want with all that money? That's simple; they want to pay their oil bills.

Since 1973 the Arabs have extorted $133 billion from the oil consuming countries. About $50 billion of that, according to Senator Church's subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy, has been invested in stocks, bonds, land and businesses in the industrial West. Another $50 billion is on short term deposit in big commercial banks, mostly in New York and London. About half of the Arabs' short-term deposits are in United States banks.

Twenty-five billion dollars is a lot of money, even to David Rockefeller. Huge deposits like that could tremendously increase bank earnings. Bankers traditionally have been conservative about the quality

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of their assets. But the large New York banks were caught up in the go-go spirit of the 1960s. They are now obsessed with showing a better earnings record than their competitors. This is a dangerous frame of mind for a banker.

So the Arabs dangled the $25 billion and the New York banks grabbed for it. But there were two strings attached. First, the bank's solvency becomes subject to Arab whim. To make money on this $25 billion, the banks have had to lend it out again. But the Arabs may pull out these short-term deposits at any time and thereby bust the banks, which cannot recall their loans so quickly—if at all. In the old West the big rancher controlled the local bank because he was the big depositor. In the same sense the Arabs now control the New York banks. These banks are captive to international extortionists. In any honest view the New York banks should now be viewed as Arab institutions. David Rockefeller, based as he is on oil, is now a mouthpiece for the oil sheiks.

The second big string was that in order to get the Arab deposits, the banks had to agree to lend money to poor countries so they can purchase the oil they need. There was a clear advantage to the Arabs here since the poor countries simply could not pay the quadrupled oil prices. In a reasonable world these nations would have refused to pay and the cartel would have been forced to lower its price. But the New York banks have lent money to the LDCs to finance oil that they cannot afford. And the Arabs lend the money to David Rockefeller to lend to the LDCs.

The Arabs could have extended credit themselves to finance poor countries' oil purchases. They chose the indirect approach for a good reason. If you give credit directly you have the LDC as a debtor. The Arabs preferred to have Chase Manhattan as a debtor.

Maybe the LDCs are solid debtors who will pay despite the absence of legal obligation. Perhaps a moral obligation is enough for them. The big 12 are Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, the Philippines, Thailand and Zaire. Mexico and Brazil lead the pack. The US banks are owed $11.6 billion by Mexico (not yet an oil profiteer itself) and $11.1 billion by Brazil. The Arabs have been mercilessly grinding down the poor. Before the 1973-74 price hike, the oil-importing LDCs were running an annual current account deficit of about $8 billion. Since then, they have run annual deficits of $30 billion (1974); $38 billion (1975); and $26 billion (1976). The figure is expected to level off at a mere $25 billion per year.

George Salem of Reynolds Securities reports that as of two years ago the 15 largest US banks had total loans outstanding of $235 billion, of which $38 billion (16 percent) were to LDCs. But this $38 billion was more than twice these banks' total capital. How good are the credits? Hans Mast, executive vice president of the Swiss Credit Bank in Zurich has said, "It would seem obvious that debt moratoria, with restructuring of debts, will increase in the next four years." Mast believes that since nothing has been done to solve the problem—oil overcharges causing LDC deficits—it has to get worse. And at some point the arrangement must topple.

A brief look at Zaire and Peru may give some idea of the strength of this credit. American and other banks thought Zaire was credit-worthy to the extent of $500 million, a figure based mainly on its copper deposits. War in Angola, however, cut off the Benguela Railway, thereby sharply reducing copper production. In early 1975 Zaire stopped paying its public and private debts. The public creditors met at the Paris Club in June 1976. The defaulted debt was rescheduled over a 10 year period. The privately owned banks, offered a similar "stretch-out" on their debt by President Mobuto Sese Seto, refused. Instead, after Zaire met certain conditions, Citibank agreed to use its best efforts to raise a "new" loan of $250 million. This was, of course, simply a rollover replacing part of the existing debt that would be paid. The banks think it is significant that they have avoided a "rescheduling." The Zaire situation remains very much in the air.

How easy is it to get the money out of a country once it has defaulted? Not easy at all; in fact, impossible. These are not wealthy countries that just don't want to pay. They are very poor countries that can't pay. Peru has defaulted on about $1.2 billion in bank loans. The bankers and their front, the International Monetary Fund, insist upon payment. Payment can only come from increased taxes in one form or another. When taxes are increased to pay foreign leaders the result is rioting, martial law and death.

In South America it is common for the government to subsidize the price of necessities—milk and bread—to protect the low-income consumer. A reduced subsidy—increasing the price—would consequently amount to a tax increase making funds available for foreign bankers. In July 1977 Peru announced price increases of 30 to 120 percent on milk, bread, cooking oil, gas and transit fares. The price increases were canceled after 20 people were killed in riots. Under renewed pressure from the bankers the increases were announced again in May 1978 and, once more, rioting swept 28 cities and towns, killing another 30 people. The military government responded by imposing martial law, postponing elections and suspending the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and assembly. Just last week the government announced a 20 percent increase in the price of gasoline and rice. A general strike was called, and once more the constitution was suspended and martial law was imposed.

Clearly the New York banks are captive to both Arab creditors and LDC debtors. They are vulnerable both ways. The Arabs may pull out or the LDCs may collapse.

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The banks have no doubt that they will come out of this alive. But how? Could they prudently reduce their loan exposure and gradually disengage? No way. They are captives of their debtors. In early 1975, New York City's Deputy Mayor James Cavanaugh spoke for all large dead-beat debtors when he said: "The banks and we are a community of interest. If we go down, they go down." Cavanaugh has been wrong so far—the city and Cavanaugh went down, but the banks didn't. But the LDC figures dwarf the city debt held by the banks (maybe $1.5 billion). How tough can you get with someone who owes you $11 billion? In 1976, Peru—which owed the banks a mere one billion dollars—was able to pry another $200 million out of them. The American banks had to consider Peru's prognosis dim in view of a 1975 foreign trade deficit of $1.5 billion. But what choice did they have? One banker said during the Peruvian negotiations, "We're faced with the same decision as we are with a factory that is about to go bankrupt. Do you liquidate, or put in more money to see if you can make a go of it?" In December 1977, the Peruvians confessed they had not been able to make a go of it.

So why isn't David Rockefeller worried? Surely President Carter is not going to take over a defaulting country as the British and French foreclosed Egypt in the 1860s during the reign of Ismail Pasha. In those great days the lenders just walked in, took over the tax collection system and paid themselves. The banks remain supremely confident that the government will come to their rescue, but they expect the method of salvation will be more modern. The loss will be socialized by getting the American taxpayer to bear it. Perhaps it will be done through a front like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but the banks are sure it will be done. After all, they reason, can the government stand aside while the US banking system goes bankrupt?

A bail-out device called the Witteveen Facility went easily through Congress early last year. Under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund the Witteveen Facility provides $10 billion for loans to countries hurt by the oil gouge. The countries can then pay off the New York banks. Chase Manhattan Bank insisted to the Senate Banking Committee that this was no bail-out. John Haley, executive vice president of Chase, denied that "a recommendation for increased official international credit is basically a plea for a 'bailout' of the major multi-national commercial banks. . . . What is at stake here is *not* the health of the major banks but rather the health of the world economy." *The Wall Street Journal* did not see it that way. It editorialized that an honest name for the proposal would have been "The Bankers Relief Act of 1977." The *Journal* said this "indirect approach" was "necessary to fool the taxpayers into thinking they are really helping the poor." The easily fooled taxpayer can look forward to more Witteveen Facilities. But the problem is so massive. At some point the question will become "Who bails out the US?" Does David Rockefeller? How about Saudi Arabia?

William J. Quirk

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Jimmy Carter can cure the new feudalism.

A New Nationalism

In recent years American politics has been distracted by a new and destructive pluralism. This new pluralism disorganizes public policy and sets group against group. Its paralyzing and disorienting effects challenge citizens, leaders and above all the president to elicit and affirm a new nationalism that will again put us in mind of what makes us a people and again give direction to our public affairs.

The problem is not the conflict of classes. Indeed, we may look back with nostalgia to the class struggle of New Deal days, which did much to make sense of politics and policies then. But class is less and less relevant to the issues of the present and to the behavior of voters. Our problem is pluralism, not polarization. Our hope should be for a new public philosophy that will again fuse the democratic idea with the national idea.

Franklin Roosevelt's first inaugural address on March 4, 1933, could have been entitled "the new nationalism" as fittingly as any utterance of his cousin Theodore, who first gave currency to the expression. None of the main points in that famous speech can be summarized without reference to the nation. No other thematic term faintly rivals it in emphasis. Next to "nation" the term given most prominence is, not strangely, "leadership." God received the obligatory reference at the end. But there was no effort to seek spiritual guidance in biblical quotation. On the contrary, Roosevelt insisted that "our common difficulties" concerned "only material things."

Franklin Roosevelt's nationalism was, first, a doctrine of federal centralization. The principle of federal activism, which some have seen as the principal dividing line in American politics since the 1930s, was introduced by the New Deal. But Roosevelt called not only for the centralization of government, but also for the nationalization of politics. And in the party realignment of those years, the old rustic and sectional politics yielded to a new urban and class politics.

In its third and most important sense, Roosevelt's nationalism was an imperative of integration. A new specification of the democratic idea gave the New Deal

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that bias toward "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid" to whose elevation Roosevelt had pledged himself during the campaign. Unlike socialist and social democratic ideologies in other countries, however, the egalitarianism of the New Deal sought not a redistribution of income, but a redistribution of power. A major example of the New Deal's tactic of "countervailing power," which John Kenneth Galbraith identified later as the unifying principle of the main achievements of the 1930s, was the Wagner Labor Relations Act of 1935. In spite of bitter and sometimes bloody resistance, this act, which sought to redress "the inequality of bargaining power" between employees and employers, changed not only the practices of industry, but also the attitudes of society. In power and status, the position of the ordinary working stiff was never the same again.

In such ways, then, a new public philosophy was formulated, embodied in legislation and espoused by a political coalition that dominated American politics from the 1930s to the 1960s. This political force did not have the field all to itself. Its assertions called forth counterassertions. But the conflict had a certain coherence: one side said "yes," the other said "no," but both were responding to the same questions.

That old political system was not a system of consensus politics (which in my opinion rarely accomplishes much). Neither was it the politics of pluralism, which some observers see in contemporary societies where warring groups, emptied of any vision of the social whole and guided only by the residuum of their private concerns, quarrel over the spoils.

In his inaugural address of January 20, 1977, President Carter's nationalism was as pronounced as Roosevelt's. His overwhelming concern was national integration on the basis of a new affirmation of equality. He proposed to advance "human rights" and "equality of opportunity" so that in the future it could be said that while he was president, "our nation . . . had torn down the barriers that separated those of different race and region and religion and where there had been mistrust, built unity, with respect for diversity."

But as President Carter's inaugural rhetoric suggests, his problem is very different from Roosevelt's. President Carter's problem and his opportunity—for the situation harbors promise as well as peril—derive from the dual revolution of the 1960s. I have characterized this dual revolution, in what may be rather lurid language, as "the technocratic take-over" and "the romantic revolt." Each has contributed to the present fragmentation of polity and society.

In the 1960s a new professionalism emerged in the public service. Founded on the expertise produced by the enormous advances in the natural and social sciences during the postwar years, it gave to technically and scientifically trained people in government a growing influence on public policy. The new professionalism displayed its influence most strikingly in the fields of defense and space policy. But in the diverse fields of domestic policy—health, housing, urban renewal, highways, welfare, education, poverty, environment—the new programs of the 1960s and after drew heavily on specialized and technical knowledge in and around the federal bureaucracy.

These technocratic trends are centralizing, but also create new fragmenting effects. Common disciplines and subdisciplines promote cooperation within vertical hierarchies running from central program chiefs to local providers of services. These bureaucratic enclaves in turn establish cordial relations with legislative subcommittees and with the groups of consumers who benefit from their services. Professionals may cooperate within the same program, but their dispersion in many different vertical hierarchies gives them little opportunity or incentive for concerted action toward national priorities and problems. Policymakers are separated from one another and so are beneficiary groups and the providers of services. The outcome of the technocratic takeover is to centralize the making of policy, but at the same time to weaken the ability of the political actors to function as a national public. This sort of fragmentation is familiar to anyone in Washington.

The romantic revolt, otherwise known as the counterculture of the 1960s, has provided intellectual and moral premises for the other strain of the new pluralism. As an artistic and literary movement, it has been an influence on, and an expression of, the new and more permissive lifestyles of our time. Its affinity with the romantic movements of earlier days is obvious. Its message is a message of liberation from conventional morality, authority and society in the name of spontaneous feeling and freely rendered mutuality and love. It speaks not only to the individual but also to the group. The basis of group life is found not in economic need or universal values, but in a common culture, a distinctive way of feeling and acting.

This new regard for the cultural basis of group life powerfully served to justify the resurgent ethnicity of the 1960s. It increased appreciation for the distinctive cultural endowments of ethnic groups and the way these cultural endowments help such groups to take advantage of the opportunities of American society. Perhaps in no other respect is the break from the New Deal sharper than in this recognition of the importance of cultural in contrast with economic factors. The new egalitarianism of the Great Society explicitly recognized the rights of groups and, moreover, perceived groups as constituted by their distinctive cultures and lifestyles. In spite of this recognition of separate group identities, however, this new egalitarianism was national through and through, rejecting separatism in favor of a full integration of disadvantaged groups—most critically, blacks—into the national community.

Yet the attitudes that supported this new and constructive recognition of cultural groups as objects of

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public policy also have fragmenting effects. In the late 1960s a wave of ethnic feeling surged over the country and through the cities. The earlier celebration of diversity gave way to disharmony and tension as groups resisted preferential treatment for others or sought it for themselves.

Descending from the dual revolution of the 1960s, the new pluralism takes these two forms: a pluralism of consumer groups enjoying benefits from social programs directed by central technocrats allied with local providers, and a pluralism of cultural groups protecting or claiming advantages for their members in relation to government or other groups. Within this vast array of groups one cannot locate a coalition sharing a public philosophy. Nor is it easy to see how such an integrating outlook could arise.

We need a new nationalism to reconcile and give direction to the fragments of this new pluralism. I would not attempt to suggest its substance. In American political history writers, teachers and people of that sort rarely have been able to perform such a service. Judging by the past, we should look rather to men actively engaged in political life and above all to the president of the United States to identify and elicit that new sense of direction. Given my diagnosis of the problem, President Carter is singularly well equipped to meet this need.

Jimmy Carter is both a romantic and a technocrat. By upbringing he is a southern Baptist, who, although given to quoting Reinhold Niebuhr, professes a faith in the goodness of human nature that is Wordsworthian in its innocence. On the other hand, he is by education a naval officer and, as he likes to emphasize, a "nuclear engineer," a problem solver who gives numbers to the reasons for and against a decision and then adopts the side with the larger total. I profess to see this duality even in his appearance: the mouth that smiles too easily, the eyes that smile not at all.

Yet in this duality he is representative of this country at this time. To an unprecedented degree, Americans today want to be terribly nice and terribly efficient. Jimmy Carter resonates to those impulses. If anyone can reconcile them, it is he. It is uncanny that the people should have picked so representative a man as their leader. His strength is that he embodies our contradictions.

Samuel H. Beer

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Brazil's military rulers think economic prosperity will "trickle down," but it had better start trickling faster.

The Least Underdeveloped Country

by Stephen Kinzer

Brazil may be the most exciting country in South America. Its huge size (larger than the continental United States), its lavish endowment of natural resources and its unending variety have excited pioneers for centuries, from the original Portuguese colonists to the modern-day capitalists who have built one of the most dynamic economies in the developing world. But the problems of rapid growth, some of them inevitable and others caused by inadequate political leadership, are catching up with Brazil. The nation is at a crossroads and an air of anticipation—not necessarily optimistic—is palpable.

Stephen Kinzer, a Boston writer, reports frequently on Latin America.

On March 15, General Joao Baptista Figueiredo will take over as the fifth military president of Brazil since the 1964 coup that overthrew left-leaning President Joao Goulart, with United States encouragement. Figueiredo was chosen by his predecessor, the current president, Ernesto Geisel. Figueiredo inherits a conservative military dictatorship that remains heavy-handed, if not as brutal as in earlier years. The military rulers face both civilian opposition and growing internal rifts. They have barely addressed the injustice of Brazilian society or the social problems that are constant reminders of that injustice.

The Brazilian economic "miracle" of 1968-73 solidified the nation's position as the leading industrial power in Latin America. The economy grew at 10

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percent annually, fed by a heavy infusion of capital from both government and private (mostly foreign) companies. To build a strong system of "state capitalism," the government in Brazil has become a more active intervenor in the economy than in Allende's Chile or Peronist Argentina.

But large business profits have not improved life for most Brazilians. Government statistics show that real wages for unskilled laborers, for example, have fallen by almost half since the 1964 coup, while profits and executive salaries have risen substantially. Millions of new jobs were generated as the gross national product rose more than 150 percent between 1964 and 1976, but the gap between the wealthy elite and the poor masses has grown.

Half of Brazil's population lives untouched by the "miracle." The Brazilian government itself figures that 18 percent of the nation's 115 million people live in "absolute misery." Many rural areas, especially the backward northeast, offer nothing but unrelieved poverty and seem beyond the reach of government. In Rio de Janeiro, not far from the spectacular beaches where tourists play, children die of hepatitis and malnutrition every day. Many people have been lured to the cities from the interior, only to find themselves without work and worse off than back at home. Their first move often is to get rid of their children. There are now about a million children living on stoops or in cardboard boxes in Rio alone. Half of Brazil's population is under 18. These youths, without any attachment to the existing order, are the most volatile and explosive force in the country, as well as its greatest potential asset.

Misery and privation are the lot of common people throughout the developing world, of course, and in many countries conditions are worse than in Brazil. What makes Brazil unique is the potential ability of the country to support its people and help them start to solve their nearly overwhelming social problems. Brazil has the resources to become a worldwide model of social progress. But to take advantage of that potential, its government must place greater priority on improving the living standard of the poor. In its quest for world power, Brazil has overlooked its own people for the sake of rapid industrialization and growth that serve a small elite. Opposition forces, only now emerging from more than a decade of repression, are basing their challenge on the charge that the military is misusing the nation's wealth by refusing to apply it to domestic needs.

To help pay for its explosive economic growth, Brazil has become one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world. Foreign banks and governments hold more than $40 billion in Brazilian obligations, and more than 40 percent of the nation's foreign exchange earnings are used to service the debt. Unfortunately, Brazil's natural riches do not include one resource essential to the kind of industrial growth it seeks: oil. Brazil produces only a tenth of the oil it consumes, and 35 percent of the money it spends abroad is for petroleum products.

Still, Brazil's economic achievements are considerable. Not so long ago coffee was the economic mainstay. Today heavy industry is dominant and foreign trade is extensive. Brazil leads the developing world in the production of automobiles, appliances, machine tools and construction equipment. In 1977, manufactured goods finally surpassed agricultural products as the leading export sector. But Brazil is still the world's second largest exporter of food, and could surpass the United States by the end of the century.

One of Brazil's newest export industries, the weapons trade, has been especially successful since it began taking foreign orders in 1970. Brazil is peddling tanks, missiles, planes and other weapons to nations as varied as Libya, Togo, France and Bolivia. The arms are competitively priced, ideal for developing nations that don't need ultra-sophisticated systems, and come without ideological stipulations. The Brazilian arms industry may bring in as much as $500 million annually by the 1980s.

But Brazil's staggering social problems remain. The military leaders repeat that only continued economic growth can create wealth that will ultimately "filter down" to the poor. But this process may be too slow to avoid swelling discontent that will threaten the military government. For the trend in Brazil today remains what it has been for 20 years: impoverished families from the interior, perhaps lured by TV and film images, continue to stream southward to the industrial centers in search of work. Most cannot find it and become part of the rootless population inhabiting the rings of shanty towns and slums that surround the big cities.

A special challenge only beginning to surface is the appearance of organized protest against racial discrimination. Brazil, with the most racially mixed population of any country on earth, managed to escape racial conflict as long as it remained a primarily rural, agricultural society. But economic progress is now making clearer to blacks the limits that have always existed on their success. They cannot penetrate the top levels of business or government, and it is difficult for them to rise in professions other than music, sports or the arts.

Brazil is not now in the throes of social unrest, nor is an outburst likely soon. But there is a growing sentiment among some Brazilians that the military government has either failed on its own terms or, at the very least, outlived its usefulness. Despite the exiling of hundreds of prominent Brazilians who were potential or actual opponents of the military, there remain thoughtful critics and genuine pools of public discontent. Labor leaders have begun calling small strikes, considered treasonous until recently. Student groups, fiercely repressed for years, are starting to stir. And

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liberal elements are gaining strength within the officially sponsored "opposition" party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB).

The 1960s were a period of political turmoil and repression in Brazil as well as a period of explosive economic growth. Urban and rural guerrilla groups, fed by popular sentiment against the 1964 military coup, staged spectacular bank robberies and kidnapped diplomats and businessmen. Torture became widespread and many prisoners died in custody. Political activity was outlawed; dissenting officials were removed from office and often punished. By the end of the decade, the military regime—"the revolution," as its leaders call it—had been transformed from the temporary caretaker determined only to save the nation from socialism into a permanent ruling elite with a long-term vision of what Brazil should become. This included a profound belief that only the military had the leadership capacity to guide the nation.

During the last few years, under Geisel, some modest reforms have been enacted. But government censorship is still prevalent, union activity is circumscribed, universities are under tight government control and those protests that are tolerated must remain unobtrusive. Last month, for example, six students were arrested in Rio for putting up posters urging people to attend the trial of 17 activists who claim to have been tortured while in prison.

President Geisel's tentative reforms, which he calls a "calculated risk," culminated several weeks ago when Geisel allowed the lapse of one of the harshest symbols of military rule, Institutional Act Five. That law, in effect for the last 10 years, gave the president the right to close congress at will, dismiss elected officials, overrule court decisions and jail opponents without charges. Whether General Figueiredo will extend these recent reforms or curtail them is a subject of much speculation. The colorless president-designate has given little clue to his personal beliefs.

Brazil held an election for its congress last November. Elections held under dictatorships are always curious exercises, and this one was no different. Brazilians do not have the right to elect mayors or governors, who wield most local political power and are appointed by the central government. There are two political parties, both created by the military government after the 1964 coup. The government party is ARENA, the National Renewal Alliance, and the officially designated "opposition" is the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). All MDB candidates must be cleared by the government before they can seek office. Use of television by the opposition is restricted, though government propaganda continues without letup. The electoral districts are drawn so that pro-government regions have disproportionate voting strength. Supervision of the voting, especially in rural areas, is far from impartial.

Despite all these obstacles, the MDB, which encompasses a very broad ideological spectrum, managed a triumph in the November balloting. MDB candidates got 58 percent of the votes. Unfortunately, opposition strength in congress will be limited by gerrymandering and by the fact that one-third of the senators are appointed by the regime. (They are called "bionic senators.") Urban areas brought in heavy majorities for the opposition coalition, while ARENA strength was greatest among less informed rural voters.

Liberal MDB deputies, together with some ARENA officials who have been estranged from the regime, decided at a series of meetings last month that they will press for speedy democratization, an end to torture and political imprisonment, amnesty for all exiled and incarcerated political activists, labor union freedom, university autonomy, restraints on the exploitation of the dwindling Amazon forest, and economic policies to spread some of the nation's wealth among the masses of its people. But the role of the congress—which is currently impotent—will have to change before these developments mean much.

"The game is beginning and after I take office I shall be in charge of the ball," Figueiredo declared at election time when asked how much power he was willing to cede to civilians. "If the politicians play well, great. But if they play poorly I'll put the ball under my arm and walk off the field."

Some elements of the military are unhappy with Figueiredo and with the "moderate" line the new president is thought to represent. Geisel has had to discipline several officers who criticized his policies. In October he ordered the arrest of a general who circulated a letter condemning corruption and alleging a betrayal of the ideals of the 1964 "revolution." An early challenge facing Figueiredo, himself a former chief of domestic security, will be to unify the military behind him, for the political opposition will certainly take advantage of any split that develops.

Brazil's military rulers have transmitted to their subjects a nationalistic ambition to become a major world power. President Nixon some years ago delighted the Brazilians—and enraged Argentina—by rhapsodizing that "as Brazil goes, so goes Latin America." Nothing so irritates Brazilians as the intimation that their country is not yet prepared to take a major role in world affairs; some of them still seethe at Charles de Gaulle's scornful assessment of Brazil as "not a serious country."

Human rights became an issue in US-Brazil relations in 1977, after the State Department (acting under congressional mandate) issued a report criticizing in rather mild tones the Brazilian government's attitude toward the rights of its people. Brazil protested by canceling its 25-year-old military assistance treaty with the US. This move was more symbolic than substantial, since Brazil is self-sufficient in weapons and maintains the largest military force (196,000) in Latin America.

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Another conflict with the United States arose from the effort by the Carter administration to prevent West Germany from selling eight nuclear reactors to Brazil. US officials fear that the transaction could give Brazil material to become a nuclear power, and they appealed to the Germans on the grounds of non-proliferation. The Germans rejected Carter's plea, but Brazilians are embittered by what they perceive as an effort by one industrial giant to prevent the emergence of another.

The Carter administration had encouraged Brazil's tentative liberalization. Carter's visit to Brazil last April soothed relations somewhat. Vice President Mondale told a high-level Brazilian delegation last month that "we are pleased by the trends in your nation," and the fundamental admiration Brazilians have for the US—admiration based largely on American economic achievements and the ability of political freedom to survive alongside them—remains unshaken.

Brazil's headlong assault to strip and develop the Amazon jungle symbolizes its eagerness for economic growth now, and its willingness to deal with social and environmental problems later. But as a new generation without any stake in the political stability or economic strength of the country comes of age, military leaders may find themselves unable to sublimate popular discontent as successfully as they have until now.

Much of the government's success since 1964 has been a result of its willingness to use its considerable raw power to maintain domestic tranquillity. But under pressure at home and abroad, it is now relinquishing some of that repressive power. Opponents, left outside the system for so long, are anxious to test the changing limits of their freedom. If popular opposition continues to grow, the military will have to choose whether to confront it with renewed repression or to grant the freedom it seeks. Most Brazilians think the generals are not yet ready to retire to the barracks and leave the fate of their nation to civilians.

The price of a moral posture without personal risk.

Liberals and Revolution

by Glenn Tinder

Revolution has been discredited among American intellectuals. Most would agree that as a method of historical change, it is sanguinary and unreliable. As an enactment of moral imperatives, it ordinarily requires a degree of self-assertion and ruthlessness that is morally destructive. The romantic vision of revolution, expressed, for example, in the writing of John Reed, saw in events like those of 1917 a triumphant fusion of historical necessity and moral certitude. That vision has been almost extinguished. This is probably due to Stalin more than to any other historical figure. Stalin, once a revolutionary hero, in fuller light not only took on the features of a monster; he also created a shadow that fell on other revolutionary heroes. The lustre of Lenin has been dimmed, and we shall not be surprised to find the visage of Mao become steadily less inspiriting as the new regime in China makes us better able to calculate the casualties, through insult and humiliation as well as through violence, for which he bears a responsibility.

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For revolution to be discredited deepens the self-assurance of liberals. Their concept of historical change, it appears, has not been in error. Some liberals of course have been moved by the romance of revolution, even to the extent of idolizing Stalin, but their errors were of sentiment more than action. In their political lives as a whole liberals can feel that they have been on the side both of effectiveness and of rectitude.

Nevertheless, the moral challenge inherent, if not in revolution itself, in the lives of revolutionaries, is not easily met. Revolutionaries in power are one thing; revolutionaries in opposition and exile are another. Only the former have been discredited. The latter frequently exemplify a dissociation from the evils of established societies, a devotion to the world's oppressed and miserable multitudes, and a willingness to sacrifice their own comfort and lives that cannot leave liberals altogether at ease. They show us at least one way in which a human being born into an unjust society and a brutal world can avoid moral degradation. Hence our continued interest in Trotsky (aroused anew by

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Irving Howe's fine book)—an interest not merely in a romantic personality, historical figure and literary genius but, in spite of crimes committed by the revolutionary in power, an interest in something exemplified by the revolutionary in exile: moral integrity. Trotsky willingly gave up most of the things bourgeois liberals prize—home, family, status, vocation, security, and finally life—for an ideal of universal justice and peace. Much about Trotsky, such as the soundness of his political judgment or the depth of his compassion, can be questioned. But setting aside his interlude in power, one of his characteristics is exempt from doubt: he did not compromise with established injustice in order to serve personal convenience and safety.

In short, revolutionaries do not show us how to direct the course of history or how to fuse power and morality. They do, however, show us something about meeting the moral problem of living untainted in an unjust world.

Here is a moral challenge—scarcely even noted in typical criticisms of revolution—that might well be disquieting to American liberals, most of whom enjoy highly privileged lives in a grossly inegalitarian world and nation. To say this is not to ignore the constitutional decencies secured by American political institutions nor the prosperity made available to historically unprecedented numbers of people by the American economic system. But despite all of its virtues, America is roughly comparable to imperial Rome in its power and wealth and in the inequalities these entail abroad and at home. And America far surpasses imperial Rome in its seductiveness—in the skill with which it provides comfort and entertainment that dull the critical edge of political imagination. American liberals are opposed to this system in principle, but in their lives they accept and enjoy it. An example such as Trotsky's may not demand emulation, but it does give us reason to think. To what extent are the principles professed by liberals nullified by their lives?

Most liberals would answer that even though they enjoy privileges inherent in unjust arrangements, they are dedicated to gradually altering those arrangements. Their moral integrity is preserved by their commitment to peaceful change. But there are difficulties in this answer.

Revolution as a strategy for destroying injustice has been discredited, but peaceful change as a substitute has not been vindicated. Inequality in America is supported both by organizational necessities inherent in a vast and complex social and economic order, and by a rapacity proportional in scale to the wealth and power to be gained. The poor in America have become better off during the last 50 years, but the proportional distribution of wealth has remained roughly the same. Liberal reform has done less to improve the lot of the disadvantaged than capitalist expansion has done.

A second difficulty in the liberal position is that the contribution an average individual can make to peaceful change—even so far as such change is possible—is infinitesimal. It may be said that the contribution an average individual makes to maintaining established inequalities is likewise infinitesimal and that the liberal must be judged by moral posture and not by historical consequences. But what is the moral posture of one who enjoys privileges within an inegalitarian and imperial nation? The moral risks run by liberals would be less severe if there were economic, social or political costs involved in promoting peaceful change. But normally there are none whatever. Most liberal reformers in America can consolidate, if not improve, their social and professional standing through their political activities.

It is hard to know, even in one's own case, whether a commitment that costs nothing has any substance. Doubt is aroused particularly by a consideration of American liberals in a global setting. If the wealth of the entire world were redistributed according to the requirements of equal justice, most American liberals would suffer a large and unpleasant change in circumstances. The fact that any such redistribution, within the foreseeable future, is not even a remote possibility, and might be undesirable as well, is precisely what makes the moral posture of liberals so questionable. Deploring the poverty of the common people in Asia and Africa is for most of us morally invigorating and at the same time agreeably inexpensive.

It may seem that the dilemma can be resolved only by following Jesus's injunction to the rich young man who felt the moral inadequacy of merely refraining from misdeeds such as murder and theft. "Go, sell what you possess," he was told, "and give to the poor." Liberals differ from revolutionaries primarily in their willingness to bear the indefinite continuance of unjust suffering. How can they rightfully do that except by sharing in that suffering?

Jesus's injunction, however, cannot be put to most of us in practical terms. Very few could subject themselves to poverty without inflicting unjust suffering on dependents—on wives, children, parents. Nor could they do so without reducing what little power they have to produce peaceful change.

It is not even clear that Jesus's injunction can be put in practical moral terms. It is similar to the requirement to love one's neighbor as oneself: a representation of the ultimate to which we need not try to make worldly life conform. It's not clear, for example, that self-imposed suffering has any moral value. Even Simone Weil, a writer with no marked inclination to find moral compromises gratifying, says of possessions and other possible objects of renunciation that "we must not lay these things down of ourselves but lose them—like Job."

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Being an American today is an ambiguous blessing. We need not, like the guilt-ridden Americans of whom Eugene Ionesco has recently complained, deny that it is a blessing at all. Americans have intellectual and spiritual, as well as economic, opportunities. But these opportunities are perilous because taking advantage of them means accepting and gaining from the greatest concentration of power and wealth in all of history—an act that can hardly be innocuous for anyone but that threatens moral disaster for those who disapprove of the conditions from which they willingly profit.

There is no apparent way of resolving this liberal dilemma. There are good reasons for eschewing both violent revolution and voluntary poverty. This implies, however, that for Americans to feel guilt-ridden is more appropriate than Ionesco apparently recognized. The question for liberals is how to keep their guilt from being wholly destructive. Liberal guilt threatens this when it surfaces in a rancorous inability to see that America has some admirable characteristics (as did imperial Rome), or when it takes the form of histrionic self-accusations which are lacking in genuine anguish.

What is needed, I suggest, is a tragic political consciousness. This would mean acknowledging that neither violent nor peaceful change offers promising roads to justice, that historical progress is not made likely by any method. It would mean acknowledging also our own complicity in the injustices that persist, for few if any individuals can morally disentangle themselves from history, securing their own innocence in a guilty world.

A tragic political consciousness is unwelcome to most liberals, partly because their circumstances do not force it upon them and partly because the liberal tradition does not recommend it. Both our material plenitude and our philosophic forefathers encourage us to think that action can be effective, life can be whole and uncompromised, and happiness can be enduring. A tragic attitude toward action is especially difficult to achieve. Liberals persistently ask, what must we do? When told that there is nothing we can do with any assurance of success, they can scarcely believe that they have received an answer. But the very heart of a tragic political consciousness is recognition that man is immanent in history, not sovereign, and that the universe in its entirety is not under our control. A tragic outlook is distasteful to most liberals by virtue of the very fact that it is an attitude and not a solution; worse, it is an attitude of not expecting solutions.

It is true that liberalism contains elements that contribute to a tragic political consciousness. Liberals regard the established society as drastically imperfect; in this way liberalism is nearer to a tragic consciousness than conservatism is. Liberals also believe existing imperfections are invulnerable to quick and deliberate correction; here liberalism is more tragic than radicalism. But liberalism in its typical forms remains far from a tragic consciousness because of two deeply rooted assumptions: that eventually the imperfections of society will be eradicated, and that in the meantime those of us who work toward that end, while taking pleasure in the lives that chance has bestowed on us, belong among the righteous of the earth.

To suppose that these assumptions, reinforced as they are by circumstance, inclination and tradition, can be readily dispelled would only exemplify the uncritical optimism I am attacking. One bit of evidence for their tenacity can be seen in the apparent passage into obscurity of a great liberal who had fully divested himself of liberal illusions—Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr was not a deep or original philosopher, but he warned us with unmatched eloquence against contemplating with complacency either human nature or the historical future. Even in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, however, Niebuhr's name is at best vaguely familiar to the literate public.

But we needn't overestimate the burdens of a tragic political consciousness. The danger to which liberals are exposed is basically that of alienation, of being cut off by their pride and privileges from the human race and from history. This is a danger, rather than a blessed escape from horrifying reality, only on the assumption that if we live without deceiving ourselves, we may find our way to values of greater import than the everyday pleasure and contentment often sanctioned by liberal thought. The idea of tragic political consciousness implies that we had better not rely on what we ourselves can do or on any foreseeable course of events. But it does not imply that we must resign ourselves to desperate dissatisfaction. It leaves room for hope—hope that in recognizing our own guilt and weakness we will gain a sense of unity with humanity, and that in clearing away expectations of obvious and unequivocal progress we will achieve access to more mysterious historical meanings.

The liberal hero of Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed* may be worth keeping in mind. Stepan Trofimovitch Verkhovensky not only was grievously disappointed but also was personally humiliated by political events that unfolded around him. Finally, under the impact of these experiences, his reason was unsettled and his hold on life itself was lost. But his optimistic illusions were destroyed and the way was opened for an understanding of things so deeply reassuring that they dissipated the agony of death. Stepan Trofimovitch is a type rarely encountered in Dostoevsky's works: interesting and convincing, but not demonic and not doomed. It could even be said that having had his liberal misconceptions painfully corrected, he reached just before his death the state that liberals typically seek: he was happy. Liberals are not called on to embrace misery, but only to divest themselves of an optimism which renders them allies in fact of a system they oppose in principle, and threatens to put them in a posture of unwitting but disastrous hypocrisy.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on theater

Stages of Discussion

Theater Communications Group, which is supported by foundation and government grants, is an organization that helps the nonprofit professional theater with some 20 different kinds of services. Lately TCG released its fourth survey of economic conditions for some of those theaters in 1977. Questionnaires were sent to 163 theaters; 153 responded. In 1977 those 153 theaters did 1625 productions. According to *Variety* of December 27, 1978, in the 30th week of the new season, Broadway and the road had a total of 46 productions playing. Double that figure to cover commercial shows that closed in those 30 weeks; double it again to cover shows to come later this season; double it again, just for luck. The total is 368, some distance below a year's work in those 153 nonprofit professional theaters—which are not all of such theaters.

Statistics in an art not only prove nothing about quality, they can mislead or misdirect. Also, those figures don't say anything about sources; most of the plays done in those 153 nonprofit theaters originated in the profit theater. But in terms of daily activity there can be no question that the vast preponderance of professional theater work in this capitalist country is nonprofit and subsidized.

The TCG survey, investigating further a control group of 25 theaters, shows an interesting point about subsidy. Foundations and individuals have become the two largest sources of contributions. The federal government (National Endowment for the Arts), which had been the second largest donor, is now third. This despite the fact that the NEA got a larger appropriation from Congress in that year. The gross appropriation went up 14.6 percent, but the amount allotted to the theater by the NEA went up only 1.9 percent.

Despite this lag, the American theater is clearly one more area of faint-hearted, thinly disguised socialism, like railroads. Complete government support would not automatically improve the theater, though in other countries such support has kept some theaters—and most railroads—far, far above the US level. Much nonprofit production is dull. But most profit production is dull too, and more importantly so, because the profit theater is still the port of entry for many new plays and the tariff is high. One possible, even probable effect of unfeigned, complete government support, from some enterprise on Broadway to small theaters everywhere, would be the widening of that entry, the ability to risk more kinds of plays.

Like most other commentators I've read, I've had trouble in not laughing-and-crying at the announcement about the new Beaumont Theater plans—the five-person directorate under an executive director. Let us pray. But already it's possible to see one serious piece of miscasting, easily put right and greatly to the Beaumont's benefit. Edward Albee has been appointed "company playwright," which means that "he may be represented by a new play or a revival of one of his works." In short, as that "may" indicates, Albee's name is being used as window-dressing. But Albee could be the most useful person of the lot. He ought to be appointed dramaturg of the Beaumont. As playwright, Albee unfortunately now gives us little to hope for. But as literary manager, judge of new plays, seeker and developer of new plays and new translations, active adviser on productions in progress—in all the functions of the dramaturg that have been traditional in Europe since Lessing—Albee would be invaluable, I think. His critical articles, which appear sporadically, are very keen; his judgment about all work except his own (a natural shortcoming) is fine. As an intellectual goad and an artistic influence at the Beaumont, Albee could make the difference between floundering and achievement. I hope that irrelevant pride would not keep him from accepting. I hope that the glamour-bedazzlement of Lincoln Center—in this case with a big-name playwright—will not keep them from offering him a whole new career, full and life-enhancing.

There's another way to categorize the two kinds of American theater production. Unsubsidized, profit-seeking theater is electronically amplified (at least in New York); subsidized, nonprofit theater is not. Here, for the latest silly instance, is the *Monteith and Rand* show, with a two-person cast, playing at the Booth, one of the smallest houses on Broadway, and there are mikes in the footlights and speakers at the sides. This has nothing to do with acoustics: the Booth opened in 1913 and has always been one of the best theaters in town. P.a. is now a cultural tic. After decades of radio and sound films and TV—but mostly I think because of *seeing* mikes so often in the hands of Sinatra and followers—people now think they can't hear unless the sound is coming out of a speaker, just as they can't see 3-D movies without special glasses.

The mikes don't much help John Monteith and Suzanne Rand. They are a comedy pair who begin weakly and only occasionally improve. The sketches fluctuate, with scattered laughs: an old dirty joke set to music; a man (varying

Films Worth Seeing

Autumn Sonata. Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann as mother and daughter, directed by Ingmar Bergman. Still top of the list in every sense.

Comes a Horseman. A muddled "mod" Western, poor but recommended for Jane Fonda's performance, her best in years, as a stubborn lone rancher.

My Love Has Been Burning. Disregard the title. Kenji Mizoguchi's lovely film about Japanese women's struggle for equality, 1880s. If not first-rank Mizoguchi, still wonderful.

Superman. Oh, well, why not? Christopher Reeve is amiable as the Big S, and there's lots of *stuff*.

S.K.

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the Restoration ploy of pretended impotence) pretending to be gay in order to win a girl's sympathy; an astonishingly hokey old bit about an imaginary fly—this time buzzing around a woman smoking pot; "in" jokes (again) about acting-school jargon; a number about a stewardess in an emergency at the controls of a plane—a sketch that Judy Canova would have nixed.

Monteith and Rand are at their blandest where they ought to be sharpest: improvisations on themes called out by the audience. Both of them have worked with The Proposition, the Boston improvisational group that often played in New York, and M&R seem to me no better, at best, than others in that group. (Anyway, if you see improvisers twice, you learn that they have their stock-in-trade, too.)

M&R strenuously resist being called "the new Nichols and May." Right they are. N&M were razors, small-scale satiric dramatists who performed their own works perfectly. All that M&R do is try to be funny, which is quite a different aim. Some contemporary habits and jargon come through, inevitably, but they are not satirists. They just want to get laughs. And they often fail, partly because Rand's technique is so broad and heavy.

A standing ovation at the end. Standing ovations have now become like p.a. amplification—the rule, not the exception. Before long, I expect to see a standing ovation for the ushers.

Ballroom (Majestic) is the new musical by Michael Bennett who devised *A Chorus Line*. Two fundamental faults keep it from the entertainment value of the previous show. *A Chorus Line*, it seemed to me (*TNR*, June 21, 1975), derived from Off-Off-Broadway "matrix" techniques, and was possibly suggested specifically by Joseph Chaikin's *Mutation Show*, with the performers' lives providing the material of the show, with the line of performers holding up large photographs of themselves before their faces. *A Chorus Line* wanted to tug heartstrings, all right, but at least it had some seeming self-reflexive materiality. *Ballroom* derives from a sentimental TV drama by Jerome Kass in the *Marty* vein: homely folks or old folks or both need love, too. It makes a beeline for the heart, so it doesn't get there.

The second basic fault is the setting of the story, a Roseland-type ballroom for older folks in the Bronx. Apparently Bennett chose this subject because, as in *A Chorus Line*, the natural activity in the place is dancing. (Again Robin Wagner supplies a mirrored setting in an attempt at the Chinese-boxes effect—a dancing show about a dancing place.) But in the first show the *characters* were dancers, here they are only people, dancing. So most of the dancing is only ballroom dancing, hyped up a bit. Much of the time we watch Dorothy Loudon, the lonely middle-aged heroine, dancing with Vincent Gardenia, the lonely middle-aged hero, on their way to romance. I can see the likes of Loudon's dancing on any dance floor. I can see better than Gardenia anywhere. Who wants to watch *them* dance for much of two hours?

The music, by Billy Goldenberg, isn't bad. The book, by various visible and invisible hands, is. As I listened, I kept seeing typescript pages in different colors, for rewrites and inserts.

If Bennett wants to go on doing dance-musicals about dance-places, why doesn't he stick to professional dance-places?

Books Considered

The Political Economy of Inflation
edited by Fred Hirsch and John H. Goldthorpe

(Harvard University Press; $14)

This is a collection of essays by 13 authors, all—except one American—British or British-based. As in the case of most such collections, it is uneven in quality and interest and does not lend itself to overall evaluation or summary. A reviewer therefore has a choice between concentrating on a manageable

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number of the individual essays or reporting and commenting on what he or she got out of the volume. I have chosen the latter course, fully aware that it is as likely to reflect my own views as those put forward by the various authors.

First, however, the reader should know that, according to the brief biographical notes on the contributors at the beginning of the book, only five of the authors are clearly identified as economists, the others being associated with other social sciences, journalism or government service. And the focus of the book, as the title indicates, is not on the economics of inflation in any narrow sense; "political economy," as used here, places the emphasis more on politics and sociology than on economics in the usual meaning of the term.

If I were to draw one basic conclusion from the facts and arguments presented in this book it would be simply that inflation is a by-product of class struggle. Not that the authors put it that way: none of them is a Marxist, and most are given to expressing themselves in the language of academic social science. Still, the way they use such terms as special interests, pressure groups, trade unions, labor-market monopolies, and so on, leaves little doubt that they view the working class and its striving for more real income as the underlying cause of inflation. The reasoning runs more or less along the following lines: workers, assumed (mostly implicitly) to be well organized both economically and politically, as in Britain, demand and get higher wages; employers, to protect their profits and within the constraints imposed by international competition, raise prices; all costs, including those of public services and welfare payments, are pushed up; and governments increase their spending and expand the money supply to meet the inflated requirements of production and circulation.

In this view inflation is the inevitable consequence of the modus operandi of a particular society with certain definite structural characteristics. The society is capitalist; it has a powerful working class which does not, however, aspire to change the social order; the government has extensive welfare responsibilities and sees as its overriding priority the task of containing tensions and conflicts and making the system work in its historically evolved form. Given this set of characteristics, inflation follows as inexorably as night follows day. And the remedies prescribed for the inflationary disease flow logically from the ideologies and perceived interests of those doing the prescribing. These remedies may be classified, more for convenience than descriptively, as rightist, centrist and leftist.

The rightist remedy corresponds to the interests of the capitalists and the other strata that live off the social surplus produced by the workers. Its key element of course is a method of breaking the power of the working class, and it comes in two forms. The first appears in the seemingly technical guise of monetarism. Let the government—the argument runs—refuse, through a combination of fiscal and monetary policies, to finance the increased monetary needs of the system generated by rising wages and prices. The result, in the colorful language of a letter to the editor of the London *Times* on November 1, 1978, would be "starving businesses from giving wage increases powerful, perhaps unpatriotic, unions have extorted from them, curing our economic malaise by self-destruction, stopping inflation by bankruptcy and insolvency." The other form of the rightist remedy could also be called the fascist remedy: smashing the power of the working class, which of course would presuppose a dictatorial authoritarian government. It is likely that in practice the two forms would converge.

The centrist remedy for inflation comes in the guise of a "social contract" or "incomes policy" and relies for its efficacy on persuading the workers to moderate their demands within limits acceptable to the capitalists. In societies of the kind the book under review is concerned with, it is natural enough that the task of persuasion should be left to the political representatives of the workers themselves: experience has shown that workers do not take kindly to such advice from their avowed political enemies. It is also natural enough that the process of persuasion operates very imperfectly: hence the persistence of inflation under labor and social democratic governments.

The leftist remedy, which is not explicitly addressed by the authors of *The Political Economy of Inflation*, but which is occasionally alluded to as of potential importance in the future, would be a radical change in the system, eliminating capitalist control of the economy and hence the need for a "satisfactory" share of the social product to go to the property-owning classes. Interestingly enough, one chapter in the book, which stands out because of its divergence from the recurring themes in the remaining chapters, throws a good deal of light on the potentialities of the leftist remedy. This is Chapter 3, entitled "Inflation under Central Planning," by Richard Portes, professor of economics at Birkbeck College, London. Portes shows that after an initial reconstruction period following the Second World War, the centrally planned economies of Eastern Europe have all been remarkably successful in eliminating inflation. Some backsliding in Poland and Hungary in the last few years can be plausibly attributed (though this is not done by Portes) to the development in those countries of features akin to what can be found in capitalist economies at roughly the same stage of development. Naturally one does not judge economies solely on the basis of their record with respect to inflation, but this in no way deprives that record of its interest and possible importance.

At this point some readers may be asking themselves whether the inflationary process sketched above, with the redistributive struggle of the working class as its driving force, is the only possible one in capitalist economies. The editors and authors of the book under review seem to think so. The editors' prologue contains "Statistical Background" material on Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the OECD countries as a whole; and there is no indication that the arguments and analyses advanced in the book are perceived as applicable only to the advanced capitalist countries that have powerful, non-revolutionary working-class movements. To an American—and perhaps the same would be true of a German or a Japanese—this seems strange. We have had our share of inflation in the last two decades, though of course a good deal less than the British have had to put up with, but except in a few industries, we have certainly not had a powerful or militant working-class movement. Even economically the American trade unions are relatively weak (less than a quarter of the eligible workers belong) and under conservative leadership; while politically, workers have no organizations of their own. In these circumstances it would make little sense to attribute the driving force of inflation in the United States to a redistributive struggle by the working class. Is there then some other mechanism at work in advanced capitalist economies capable of creating endemic inflation?

The answer is definitely yes. More-

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over, this other mechanism has been known and studied for a long time, at least in the United States. In 1959 the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress published a 132-page monograph entitled *Recent Inflation in the United States*, by Charles L. Schultze, then professor of economics at the University of Indiana and now chairman of President Carter's Council of Economic Advisers. Schultze's study is a classic which, so far as I know, has never been seriously challenged (though, it must be said, it has been extensively ignored or forgotten). Its basic argument is essentially simple: if prices and wages are flexible in an upward direction but not in a downward direction, i.e., if they rise in response to an increase in demand but do not fall in response to a decreased demand, then any significant *shift* in demand from some sectors of the economy to others, such as are incessantly taking place in a dynamic economy, will generate inflationary pressures. Prices, followed more or less rapidly by wages, will rise in the sectors experiencing an increased demand, with no compensating fall elsewhere. This will mean an increase in *average* prices and wages, hence a *general* increase in costs, including the cost of living, which will act to push all prices and wages up a further notch. For this process to get started and continue there need never be full employment or full utilization of productive capacity, let alone anything that could be characterized as "too much money chasing too few goods." And the role of the monetary authorities need never be more active than is implied in a willingness to accommodate the requirements of trade. (I do not mean to imply that money and finance may not also play a relatively independent role in intensifying inflationary processes, whatever the underlying mechanisms. In the United States beginning in the 1960s, for example, an enormous expansion of private and public debt, accompanied by all manner of speculative excess, clearly added fuel to inflationary fires which had already been burning for more than a decade. And internationally the pile-up of dollars outside the United States resulting from persistent deficits in the US balance of payments made it extremely difficult and at times even impossible for other capitalist countries to control their money supplies even if they had wanted to. It goes without saying that in any attempt at a rounded treatment of inflation these factors would have to be given their due weight.)

That the US economy is of the kind which underlies Schultze's theory of inflation seems quite clear. Flexibility on the upside and rigidity on the downside are normal features of oligopolistic markets such as exist in large sectors of the American economy; and even where oligopoly is absent, as in agriculture, much the same result is often achieved through various kinds of government regulation and subsidies, official price supports, and the like. One might almost say that inflation has been thoroughly structured into the American economy as it has developed since the trauma of the great deflation of the early 1930s. I am no judge of the British situation, but I suspect that these same processes are at work there too and should be added to the redistributive struggle of the well organized British working class to give a more complete explanation of the British inflationary experience. This would help to account for the greater virulence of inflation in the United Kingdom than in the United States.

What about remedies for what may be called Schultze-type inflation? Mone-

"That grasping, bigoted, ungrateful little rattlesnake."

This was General Joseph Stilwell's description of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek during World War II. Their rancorous disputes, their failure to work together as allies against the Japanese, were symptomatic of America's confused—and confusing—policy toward a beleaguered and divided China.

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tarism is as good (or bad) a cure for this kind of inflation as for any other. Money is to the economy what blood is to the living organism: by reducing the supply you can always produce a crisis, and there's nothing like a crisis to put a crimp in inflation. But smashing the labor movement, however desirable a goal it may be in the eyes of the right wing, would have little effect on inflation of the Schultze type. That leaves persuasion, only now it is not, or is only to a minor extent, unions that need to be persuaded but the thousand or so giant corporations that sell (and price) the bulk of the economy's goods and services. (For this task, it may be noted in passing, a labor party or social democratic government would, to put it mildly, be ill-equipped.) If persuasion fails to work with the nation's businessmen, and past experience provides little ground for optimism, then the final recourse would be mandatory price and wage controls. These worked, not well but tolerably, during wartime. Whether they could be made to work at all in time of peace, and/or for how long is an interesting question in the political economy of inflation on which, unfortunately, the authors of the book under review throw no light.

Paul M. Sweezy

Paul M. Sweezy is co-editor of *Monthly Review* and author, with the late Paul Baran, of *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order* (Monthly Review Press).

Underground To Palestine and Reflections Thirty Years Later by I. F. Stone

(Pantheon Books; $8.95)

Originally published in 1946, this account of the journey of a group of illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine is still a moving and valuable historical document. Stone was the first American journalist to accompany survivors of the Holocaust on their desperate voyage. Since then a vast literature on various aspects of the Holocaust, including the *Bricha*, the illegal immigration, has arisen, but the freshness of Stone's first-hand account holds the reader's interest despite the familiarity of the material. Listening to his fellow-passengers in the fetid hold of their vessel he understood what impelled this anguished drive toward Palestine, running the British blockade and risking the danger of foundering—as many clandestine ships did. What Stone saw and heard he recorded with vivid sympathy.

He offers this sympathy as his prime credential for his *Reflections* composed 30 years later. "I proved my devotion to displaced persons in and out of the Middle East years ago," he tells us. The same humanitarian impulse bids him champion Arab Palestinians today. In view of Stone's espousal of the Arab cause since 1967, when Israel escaped the tightening noose of the Arab armies through her spectacular victory, this reviewer must confess to the perhaps unworthy suspicion that *Underground To Palestine* was reprinted chiefly to bolster Stone's claim to the role of impartial spokesman for the oppressed. In his preface the author writes: "Appended to this new edition is the same reporter's reaction, thirty years later, to the plight and moral challenge of the Arab refugees created in their [the Jewish refugees'] wake."

Stone's self-confessed "weakness for refugees" and sensitivity to the homeless is surely commendable. Nevertheless, a reader who has followed the underground journey in its harrowing detail must find the comparison not only untenable but singularly lacking in the quality which Stone candidly stakes out as his special province—comprehension of human suffering. To perceive the enormity of the parallel Stone draws it is only necessary to replace Arab with Jew in his equation.

Imagine this Utopian scenario. Involved in a local conflict, 600,000 Jews flee to escape the fighting, some in irrational panic, others at the instigation of their leaders. They are not driven out. (In regard to the Arab exodus we have Stone's eyewitness testimony to that effect. In *This Is Israel*, published in 1948, Stone reported: "Ill-armed, outnumbered, however desperate their circumstances, the Jews stood fast. . . . The Arabs very early began to run away . . . . While the Arab guerrillas were moving in, the Arab civilian population was moving out.") The Jews do not have far to run. Surrounded by independent Jewish states whose borders they cross within an hour or two, they find themselves immediately in familiar surroundings, with no traumatic change of landscape, language or climate; they are among brethren. True, they have abandoned houses and villages dear to them, but they are still in the Jewish heartland and the majority find themselves in another part of the particular Jewish state they left—the West Bank and Jordan forming the major sector of historic Palestine.

Had such been the happy fate of the Jewish survivors, Stone would, of course, have had no story. There would have been no foundering boat for him to board and no tales of death chambers for him to record. However farfetched this fantasy, what Jews would have considered a blessed outcome Arabs view as a wrong. Admittedly, there is no reason why Arabs should weigh their grievances in the scale of Jewish deprivation, but a humanitarian moralist should be more conscious of differences in experience, especially one who in 1946 wrote with conviction of the refugees he described: "These Jews want the right to live as a people, to build as a people, to make their contribution to the world as a people. Are their national aspirations any less worthy of respect than those of any other oppressed people?"

In 1946 the only Palestinians Stone mentioned were Jews. A sabra he tells us denotes "native-born Palestinian"; the dance of the Jewish pioneers is the "Palestinian hora." Otherwise he writes of Arab and Jew. The shift in nomenclature that has taken place in the past decade indicates the success with which Arab nationalists, who not so long ago opposed the designation of "Palestinian" as a fragmentation of Arab peoplehood, managed to transform Arab refugees into newly hatched Palestinians. The change was a shrewd political policy undertaken with full awareness of its propaganda benefits. A refugee problem was, under the circumstances, readily soluble. An uprooted Palestinian people, claiming a Palestinian rather than Arab

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identity, was another matter. Yet whatever its synthetic origin, the Palestinian problem is here, alive and kicking, though its solution need not ignore the various factors that went into its creation.

Stone's reflections fall into two parts. The first, dramatically entitled "Confessions of a Jewish Dissident," makes the curious charge that dissenters from the Israeli line are being pilloried in the press; their views receive no coverage, their books go unpublished. Coming from I. F. Stone these laments are, to say the least, bewildering. Stone is not precisely unhonored and unsung, nor does he reach the public via samizdat. The article in which he mourns his inability to circulate his heretical opinions was featured in *The New York Review of Books*. The second article, "The Other Zionism," enjoyed top billing in *Harper's*. These are hardly obscure journals. Stone is revered by many as a high-minded spokesman of the left on various issues, including Zionism. Nevertheless, he is aggrieved because rabbis do not invite him to address their congregations. This failure, if such be the case, is merely evidence both of how familiar the Jewish community is with his thoroughly publicized position and of its distaste for PLO apologetics—no matter how soft-spoken. Israeli doves, like Eliav or Harkabi, are listened to respectfully by Jewish audiences because they share a common premise—the justice of the Zionist idea and the need to defend the Jewish state.

In the second part of his *Reflections* Stone comes up with something he calls "The Other Zionism," a designation for an apparently rare breed who, in contradistinction to other Zionists, sought justice for both Arab and Jew. He quotes A. D. Gordon and Martin Buber; he discusses the binationalist program of Judah Magnes and Henrietta Szold—he mysteriously describes the latter as a Zionist dissident—and produces quotations from well-known Zionists who expressed their hopes for Arab-Jewish coexistence as though these were rare artifacts quarried from a hidden treasure-trove: "To go back and study the Other Zionists is for dissidents like myself to draw comfort in loneliness." Anyone at all familiar with Zionist history and literature can offer Stone far more solace than Stone has been able to discover. A. D. Gordon, the revered teacher of pioneer Palestine, is very much in the mainstream and the writings of all leading Labor Zionists are filled with a deep concern for Arab-Jewish cooperation. For instance, the anthology, *Jews and Arabs in Palestine* (Hechalutz Press, 1936), includes not only serious ideological essays by representative Zionists but factual accounts of the attempts—such as that undertaken by the Histadrut in 1921—to organize Arab workers.

However, I shall content myself with citing someone whom Stone would probably decry as "Unother," Ben-Gurion. In his *Personal History* Ben-Gurion painstakingly recounts his meetings from 1933 on with various Arab leaders to negotiate a program satisfactory to Zionism and Arab nationalism (some of the meetings were arranged by Judah Magnes): "The talks continued for more than two years, in this country, in neighboring countries, and in Geneva which was the headquarters of the Palestinian-Syrian Committee headed by Shekib Arsalan and Ikhan Bey el-Jabri. Though the talks took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and mutual respect they did not reach any practical conclusions."

At a Cabinet meeting held on June 16, 1948, when the Arab invasion was still being repelled, Ben-Gurion, while discussing problems of reconstruction and the puzzling Arab flight, said: "We must begin working in Jaffa. Arab workers [those who had not joined the exodus] must be employed there, and at the same wages as Jewish workers. An Arab should also have the right to be elected President of the State. If a Jew or Negro is denied the right to be President of the United States then I, for one, doubt the existence of civil rights there."

Stone denounces the 1942 Biltmore Conference which advocated that Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth as a capitulation to the "right-wing revisionists," though he is well aware that the revisionists clamored for a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan. At this conference Ben-Gurion commented on binationalism: "If a bi-national state means simply that all the inhabitants of Palestine—Jews and Arabs alike—must enjoy equality of rights not merely as individuals but also as national entities, which means the right of free development of their language, culture, religion, then certainly no Jew, much less a Zionist, can fail to advocate such a regime."

Binationalism as a program foundered because of the total lack of Arab response. More than one Zionist vision-

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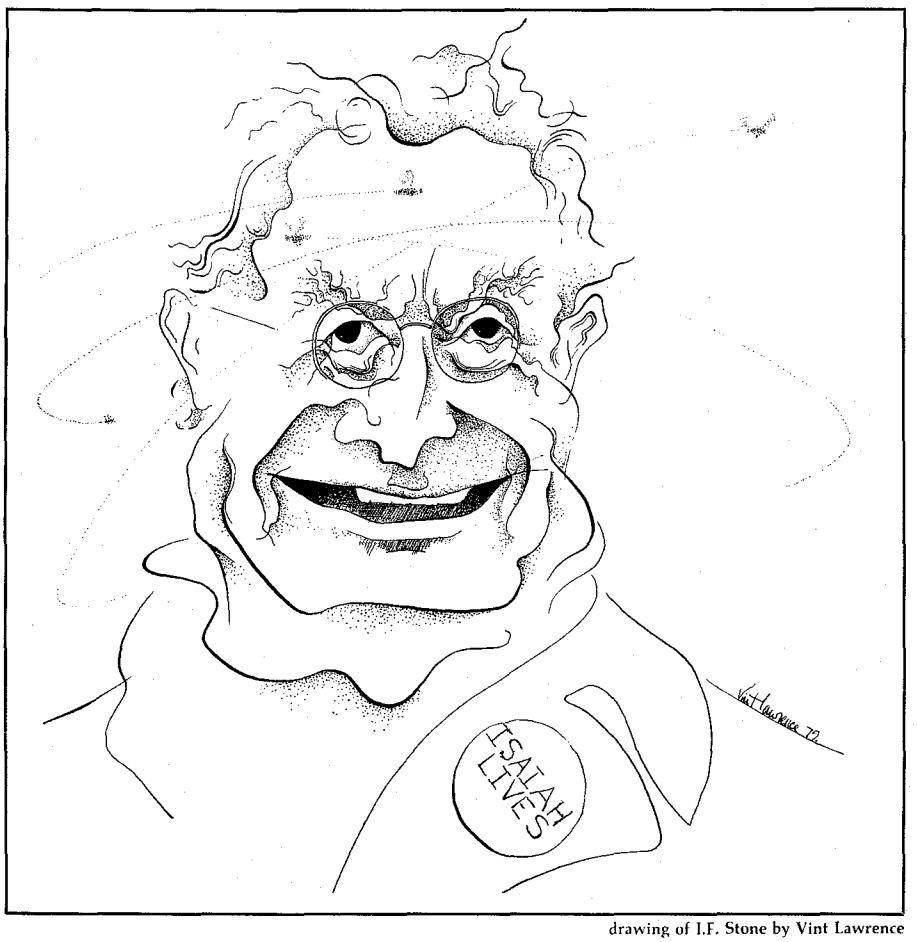

drawing of I.F. Stone by Vint Lawrence

ary abandoned an original binationalist stance because of adverse Arab reaction. Stone should look up Arthur Ruppin and Enzo Sereni among others. Arab nationalism drew its inspiration from the pro-Nazi Mufti who sought shelter with Hitler after the outbreak of World War Two. On November 30, 1941, the Mufti extracted a pledge from the Führer that as soon as German armies conquered Caucasia, "Germany's objective would then be solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere" (quoted in *The Israel-Arab Reader* edited by Walter Laqueur). Zionism, other and "Unother," had to come to terms with this reality. For the sake of independence and the right to "open the gates" to Jewish survivors the painful compromise of Partition was accepted—painful because the Jewish state was being established in one-fifth of the area originally allotted to the Jewish homeland by the Balfour Declaration. It should be recalled that Jordan, lopped off in 1922, was part of historic Palestine. Instead of setting up a Palestinian Arab state, the Arabs proceeded to cannibalize the country through Egypt's seizure of Gaza and Jordan's capture of the West Bank, which was not the fault of the Jews.

Particularly objectionable in what purports to be a survey of Zionism from its beginnings to the present is Stone's exploitation of Begin's election. That's easy pickings. To project Begin's policies back upon the past may score debating points, but it is not honest history. As on previous occasions, Stone again brings up Deir Yassin, the Irgun massacre of an Arab village in 1948. In deference to the "heroes of the Haganah" to whom Stone dedicates *Underground to Palestine*, he should have stated that the act was carried out by a dissident group and was publicly condemned by the Haganah and every responsible authority in Jewish Palestine, unlike the plaudits showered upon Arab terrorists by Arab states.

Writing about the Camp David accords in *The New York Review of Books* (October 26, 1978), Stone praises Begin's unexpected flexibility and views the proposed offer of autonomy to the West Bank as a welcome solution. As might be expected he urges Hussein, Khaled, Assad and Arafat to bargain "as hard" as Begin, "or the wily old guy may undermine the peace he too wants." In view of recent developments in which Sadat has been unconscionably raising his demands (with American approval), this counsel seems to be misdirected. Even in this article Stone cannot free himself from his obsession with a Zionism myopically unaware of the presence of Palestinian Arabs. In a rapture of discovery, he exults: "*Begin has admitted they are there.* [Stone's emphasis.] For the first time Zionism has officially recognized that there are Others in the Land." Has Stone never heard of the Feisal-Weizmann Agreement of 1919? Or is he unaware of the Labor government's official Cabinet resolution of 1974 in which the terms for a Palestinian Arab state east of Israel are spelled out? Such capricious ignorance is, to say the least, baffling. Nor can he resist pulling out the old chestnut about Golda Meir who "resolutely and mercilessly refused even to admit that there was such a thing as a Palestinian people." Golda Meir's comment on this subject should be quoted: "My actual words were, 'There is no Palestinian people; there are Palestinian refugees.' The distinction is not semantic. My statement was based on a lifetime of debates with Arab nationalists who vehemently excluded a separatist Palestinian nationalism from their formulations" (*The New York Times*, January 14, 1976).

Despite his modest outcry, "Isaiah is out of fashion," Stone hardly qualifies as a Jewish dissident. A Russian dissident is a rebel against a system of which he is a part. A priest who advocates abortion is a Catholic dissident. From what Jewish group is Stone dissenting? For years he has been an influential voice of the left, disseminating its conventional views on Zionism. Were he at this stage to compose an article pointing out the danger of a PLO state on Israel's border, were he to puncture the myths about a racist Zionism aggressive in origin, imperialist in design, and were he to send this improbable piece to the startled editors of *The New York Review of Books*, he would indeed be a dissident from the standard line of the left on Israel. Stone was not a maverick in 1946 when he wrote *Underground to Palestine*, nor in 1948 when he published his enthusiastic *This Is Israel*. At that time even Gromyko made first-rate Zionist speeches. It should be noted that in those volumes Stone showed no awareness of a "dispossessed Palestinian people," perhaps because he agreed with Golda Meir that Arab national aspirations had been amply satisfied by the terms of the Mandate and the Partition Resolution.

Marie Syrkin

Marie Syrkin was editor of the Herzl Press and is the author of *Golda Meir: Israel's Leader* (Putnam).

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FAMILY HISTORY

1. Genealogy

My family tree is mist and darkness.
Century after century,
one lay upon the other begetting me.
Then my millennium in marshes
and wandering obscurity
revealed my heritage:
monster, I lack immortality,
my race is superfluous on earth.
The last, the final generation
—after me no other, or someone else—
I lay down on top of death.
We keep our appointments with fate,
even if fate does not;
though no one came to kill me, I died.
I the ghost that I begot.
My tree is mist and darkness.

2. *Mit dem shpits tsung aroys*

The pink clue of mama's tongue,
the tip of it between her lips
when she concentrates, picking
at knots or threading a needle.
So she must have sat as a child,
a bit of sewing in her lap,
the tip of her tongue out showing
in imitation of her mother
or mother's mother—but I cannot
follow the clue any farther
and have nothing else to follow
into the lost domestic dark
of some small corner of the Pale.
Now she is patient but quick:
no false move, no motion wasted,
nothing that needs doing over,
nothing overdone or stinted,
everything measured *so*,
sized up by eye and no
anxiety, no pedantry.
Only now have I understood
I have no better measure for
the fitness of things than her gesture,
dreamy and alert and lefthanded,
of pulling a thread to length
while the spool runs 'round in her hand.
She is proud of herself as a worker,
tireless, versatile, strong,
both craftsman and laborer.
When she aims her thread at the needle,
her wide gray eyes intensify
—in them no want, no waste, no withering—
and it pleases her to say,
"Arbet macht dem leben ziess."
Oh if it does, if it did
—though smeared in iron on the gate to hell—
then of hers the overflowing sweetness,
like a sugar tit touched to battered lips,
has made something of the darkness sweet.

3. In the Eye of the Needle

Up on chairs as if they were floating
toward the kitchen ceiling, two sisters
are having hems set to the season's height,
to the middle of the knee, and no higher,
though they beg for half an inch, a quarter.
Robust and redhaired, they are two angels
beaming and grinning so they could never blow
the marvelous clarions their cheeks imply
—and I, fang still tender, venom milky,
small serpent smitten, witless with pleasure,
idling, moving my length along, spying,
summoned to Paradise by giggling
and chatter.
I saw this all
in the needle's eye—before time put it out—
compressed to two girls' gazes, hazel-eyed
and blue-eyed, one gentle, one imperious,
the soul at focus in its instant of sight,
expressive, shining there, revealed;
the seed of light flew down, a spark, two bits
of human seeing, and lay upon my heap
of gazes, bliss inexhaustibly blazing.

4. The Singer's Singer

"Vos zol ton a Yid? Epes a shneider."

David at his harp, humming and clanking.
Fifty years of this have rounded his back,
and bending forward *looks* like prayer.
His rocking feet speed the iron treadle,
the needle fangs down faster and faster;
under the little foot, little teeth,
rising up, feed the cloth forward, male
and female together. Allegories
everywhere! A holy era for sure!
With rags, with crazy remnants he saved
—hoods and motley and mops and stars—
he pieces a garment together, cut
to no pattern, sizeless, mad, its unity
a oneness of confusion. "Old fool,"
I say, "what living man would wear your suit?
You sew for monsters, or sew for no one."
He glances up, blue eyes still squinting,
"The stone wall of terror on which you break
your head: nothing can be thought, nothing
can be done—and so, to do something,
to think nothing, you break your head.
You don't break down. You won't break through.
I, too. I sew an endless suit
to clothe the mist and keep it warm
and give it any shape I can.
My son, my son, here, please put it on."

Irving Feldman

(Note: the Yiddish phrases mean, in order:
"With the tip of the tongue out."
"Work makes life sweet."
"What should a Jew do? [Shrugging.] A tailor.")

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D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare: the Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War by Paul Delany

(Basic Books; $15.95)

The 1914-18 war had been, for him, Lawrence wrote (as Somers, a character in his novel *Kangaroo*), "like Edgar Allan Poe's story of the Pit and the Pendulum—where the walls come in, in, in, till the prisoner is almost squeezed. So the black walls of the war—and he had been trapped, and very nearly squeezed into the pit where the rats were. So nearly! So very nearly."

An Englishman, Lawrence lived out the war as an exile in his own country, trapped there because his German wife, Frieda, a von Richthofen of that soon-to-be-famous family, had been reluctantly granted a divorce by her English first husband and was hoping to establish grounds for visiting rights to her children. By the summer of 1914 the life pattern for the not-yet-married Lawrences seemed set and secure. They would continue to live in Italy, where "Lorenzo" would write in a villa set among the olive groves near Lerici on the Gulf of Spezia, famed as backdrop for the death of Shelley. On occasion they would travel north to Bavaria, where Frieda's prominent relatives lived, and to England, where Lawrence's publishing interests lay and where Frieda might see her children.

In mid-July Frieda and D.H. were married at a South Kensington registry office, formalizing their relationship. It appeared to be a good start. They were already involved in various London intellectual and social circles, and Lawrence was delivering fiction and poetry to his agent, J.B. Pinker, in extraordinary quantities. By the end of the month, however, Europe was a battlefield, and so was Lawrence's marriage. By mid-August, the war that no one then believed would last very long had drawn in England, and Lawrence, a pacifist with an enemy alien wife, was fighting a war of attrition on yet another front. Methuen, his London publisher, having now read *The Rainbow*, perhaps Lawrence's best novel, had returned the manuscript, with its insistent and steamy (for its time) erotic passages, declaring that the work "could not be published in its then condition."

To add to his problems, Lawrence was a tubercular who would not admit his condition even to himself, and who, over the course of a war which would drain England of its finest young men, would be called up several times for military physical examinations which he found demeaning and punitive. "I have not a friend in the world, nor an acquaintance," he would write exaggeratedly to E.M. Forster nearly three years into the war. "Neither have I any money at all . . . ," he added, with much less exaggeration. "Neither have I much in the way of health: I seem to have spent a great deal of time in bed, lately. Really, one looks through the window into the land of death, and it *does* seem a clean good unknown, all that is left to one. . . . I am so weary of mankind."

A prophet-figure of Old Testament-style intensity, the pale, red-bearded Lawrence demanded disciple-like devotion, which he accepted as the appropriate level of friendly relations. He had utopian dreams of a future intellectual and agrarian community in Florida or Samoa, where his followers would live by the visionary phallic philosophy of "the great male and female duality and unity" he shaped from the contradictions in his own psyche. He even saw the war, as Paul Delany puts it, "as a destructive rival to what should be man's great adventure: his relation to women." But Frieda's contrary and outspoken pro-Germanism throughout the war (she was the Red Baron's cousin) did not help make Lawrence's pacifism seem any the more idealistic or in the larger interests of his metaphysics.

With his literary career a casualty of both prudery and patriotism, Lawrence survived only with a little help from his friends and acquaintances, even those who disagreed with him in every way yet saw him as a serious artist. Bernard Shaw, for example, did not like his fiction, nor Arnold Bennett his views on the war, but both were among those who sent Lawrence checks. Edward Marsh, Churchill's private secretary, helped arrange for what Lawrence then sneered at as "a miserable fifty pounds from that dirty Royal Literary Fund." Ottoline Morrell offered money as well as hospitality at Garsington for as long as Lawrence needed it, and was rewarded by Frieda's catty enmity and Lawrence's cruel depiction of Lady Ottoline as Hermione Roddice in *Women in Love*. Bertrand Russell, at first an ally, was afterward seen, as Lawrence wrote Lord Russell in his usual impolitic way, as an extreme case in which "mental and nerve consciousness exerts a tyranny over the blood-consciousness and your will has gone completely over to the mental consciousness, and is engaged in the destruction of your blood-being or blood-consciousness. . . ." Russell became Sir Joshua Malleson in the novel, which Lawrence was unable to publish, even with expurgations, during the war.

Other friends were similarly repaid, yet some parted—often several times—and then returned, such as Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), and "Kot" Koteliansky. His Jewish friends, such as "Kot," Mark Gertler, Montague Shearman, Barbara Low and David Eder, were rewarded with splenetic anti-Semitism. To Dr. Eder, who helped more than merely with money, Lawrence wrote crankily in 1917, "Best cease being a Jew, and let Jewry disappear. . . ."

One after another, friends lent, or rented cheaply, houses in which Lawrence and Frieda could live out the war, but in one of the many ironies of their existence during the nightmare years, the house in Cornwall, overlooking the sea, in which they were most alone yet most happy, was finally denied to them as off limits to individuals of suspicious background. Whether they hung curtains of different colors, or hung out the wash, or Frieda went to the outhouse at night with a flashlight, they were suspected of signaling to enemy submarines. Eventually, in October 1917, three intelligence agents searched the cottage, taking away Lawrence's manuscripts and address book, and Frieda's letters (in German), forwarded via Switzerland from her mother.

Lawrence's bitter feelings of helplessness and martyrdom would emerge—hardly fictionalized, though the names are changed—in the vivid opening sections of *Kangaroo*, which would not be published until after his postwar escape from England to Italy and Australia had provided him with more plot. On the train, Somers sits "perfectly still, and pale, in a kind of after death, feeling that he had been killed. He had always believed so in everything—society, love, friends. This was one of his serious deaths in belief. So he sat with his immobile face of a crucified Christ who makes no complaint, only broods silently and alone. . . ."

Despite the outward picture of the

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war years as a wasteland for Lawrence, and unquestionably they delayed his emergence as a major novelist for five years and subjected him to persecution and penury, these were not lost years. In the face of chronic illness and recurrent uprooting, Lawrence did write *Women in Love* and begin both *Kangaroo* and *Aaron's Rod*; and he wrote not only his windiest philosophical tracts but some of his finest short fiction as well as his seminal *Studies in Classic American Literature*. (One of Delany's useful contributions is his establishing the backgrounds of such short stories as "England, my England," "The Rocking-Horse Winner," "The Fox" and "The Blind Man.")

Despite the pervasiveness of the war, even as experienced on what was referred to as the "home front," its mad horror is seldom palpable in Delany's narrative. We find Lawrence himself as filled with panic and hysteria at close intimacies with Bloomsbury homosexuals (his loathing was clearly an attraction-repulsion) as with the closing in of the privations and horrors of a conflict which was, in Lady Cynthia Asquith's words, emptying the future. Not only is the texture of life as Lawrence was then living it largely missing, but for long stretches of pages the war does not seem to exist. We are more aware from other sources how much of the day-to-day washing, cleaning and cooking Lawrence always did, and wonder when he found the time to write, and how he ordered his wartime life as writer. The amount of copy he somehow churned out between household chores and interludes of sickness, despair, finding new places to live and scrabbling about for survival funds is awesome. Despite such lacunae, and Delany's (or his editor's) distractingly original use of capitals where lowercase might be expected, and lowercase where one would expect capitals, the war and its wrongs push themselves between the lines even when the ostensible subject is literary commentary or social gossip.

Amid the daily catastrophes in the mud of the Somme or the trenches of Flanders, Lawrence's grievances with the absurdities of the system which was persecuting him while decimating his generation become only further evidences of the overwhelming absurdities of wartime England, in which he was marooned as utterly as if he had been shipwrecked on a desert island. "I am English," he wrote to Lady Cynthia in 1915, "and my Englishness is my very vision. But now I must go away, [even] if my soul is [to be] sightless for ever. Let it then be blind, rather than commit the vast wickedness of acquiescence." But he could neither leave nor acquiesce, and the tragedy to literature, something not a part of Delany's book, which ends with the Armistice, is the warping of Lawrence's artistic vision that resulted from his wartime experience and subsequent self-exile. His life with the formidable Frieda would have been, in any case, a struggle of wills fought in the trenches between the sheets, and Lawrence's bacilli would not have postponed his death an extra day had there been no battles in France or repercussions in England. None of his novels after 1918 represents what Lawrence might have been. Lawrence, the artist, who never left home, was as much a casualty of the First World War as Rupert Brooke or Wilfred Owen, who never came back.

The Lawrences' wedding photo, July 13, 1914. From left: D.H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Frieda Lawrence, John Middleton Murry. Photo: Humanities Research Center, University of Texas.

Stanley Weintraub

Stanley Weintraub, author of *Four Rossettis: A Victorian Biography* (McKay), is now at work on *The London Yankees: American Writers and Artists in London, 1894-1914* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety 1917-1933 by John Willett

(Pantheon Books; $17.95)

The "new sobriety" is Weimar culture's longest lasting legacy; the "sober calculation and precise analysis of practical experience" still dominate our architectural style. John Willett in excellent and authoritative fashion traces the growth of an avant-garde which attempted to adjust its aesthetic perceptions to the machine and the modern city. Their "machine aesthetic," as Willett calls it, was meant to be a call to order in a postwar world where Dadaism and Expressionism encouraged a dangerous irrationality. Willett weaves a tapestry

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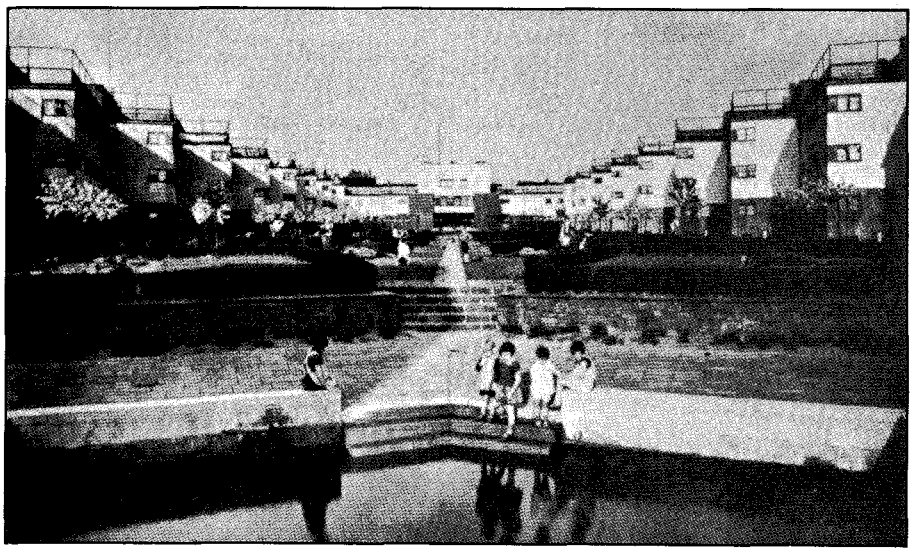
of personal relationships between the still famous and the long forgotten: names like Otto Dix, Georg Grosz, Paul Hindemith and Erich Kästner, to give only a few examples, show the broad range of those who chose matter-of-factness and sobriety over adornment and romantic feeling. Willett emphasizes the connection between this German avant-garde and the pioneers of Soviet art: men like Eisenstein, Piscator, Mayakovsky and Brecht were dependent upon one another. Chapters on Soviet art and design parallel Willett's discussions of the German scene. Splendid photographs enliven the text about a movement within which the visual was more important than the written. Indeed, the lack of pretense of the "new sobriety" led to a clarity in design still very much in evidence, while its mechanical music and the writers along the fringes of the movement are long forgotten.

The relationship between the Soviet and German artists was part of the excitement of discovering the brave new world ushered in by the Russian Revolution, the machine age and urban living. However, the "new sobriety" was destined to be crushed by those forces which assisted in its birth, as Leninism became Stalinism and the quest for clarity became ever more functional and mechanical, as impersonal as the machine itself. For all Willett's emphasis upon the personal, he tries to place this avant-garde within its historical setting: its initial inspiration through opposition to the First World War (and yet one wonders if these artists were not fascinated by the war's technology), its encouragement by the postwar German-Russian rapprochement, and its allegiance to some form of socialism (although relatively few artists joined the Communist party). Willett is frankly partisan, as he contrasts the devotion of the "new sobriety" to reason and modernity with Stalinist social realism and the neo-romanticism of the political right. Those who departed from the "new sobriety" are implicitly suspect not only of having bad taste, but also of allying themselves with anti-democratic and anti-socialist forces. Thus France, we are told, became an artistic backwater because of her love for art deco with its lack of clarity of line, its aesthetic mediocrity, and its hedonism. Such decadence is not astounding, Willett tells us, for art deco depended on old-fashioned capitalist patronage, while the "new sobriety" was based on cooperation with enlightened governments and progressive municipalities.



Rehousing Frankfurt; Ernst May's Bruchfeldstrasse estate. Photo from *Arts & Politics in the Weimar Period.*

The relationship between art and politics was never so one dimensional. There are, for example, disturbing similarities between the "new sobriety" and fascist art. Both had common roots in the arts and crafts movement, a shared emphasis upon simplicity, clarity of line, and functionalism. Willett quotes Le Corbusier's statement that the "new sobriety" is "cold and brutal, but exact and true." Both fascist design and that of the "new sobriety" contained elements of depersonalization: while this implication of the "new sobriety" surfaced through architectural conformity only after the Second World War, fascist monumentalism demonstrated such brutality from the very beginning.

The fascination felt by some artists discussed in this book for fascist "magic realism" may have been a central symptom rather than a fringe phenomenon as Willett maintains. In this regard, the attempts of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe to find a last minute compromise with Germany's Nazi masters merits more extensive analysis.

Not only is there no discussion of the complex links between left-wing and fascist art, but the book fails as well to address the relationship between this avant-garde and popular culture. To be sure, Willett illustrates the isolation and sectarianism of the "new sobriety" and also the rising tide of irrationalism which engulfed it in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Yet this very tide was rooted in popular culture, in sentimental and neo-romantic art, in the longing for myth and symbol which was as strong in the Weimar Republic as it had been during the previous century. The "new sobriety" stood apart from this deep cultural current, although the Communist party tried unsuccessfully to rescue popular culture from the Nazi embrace.

Once the initial excitement had lost its force and revolutionary hopes were buried, many painters and musicians abandoned the cooler and more impersonal approach and moved closer to popular artistic traditions. Georg Grosz, for example, left satire for sweet and sentimental pictures, while Igor Stravinsky turned to more complex musical forms. The writers whom Willett discusses, mostly antiwar novelists like Erich Maria Remarque and Ludwig Renn, do not quite fit into this picture. To be sure, they tried to shock their readers into pacifism through a confrontation with the reality of war, but at the same time much of their popular success was due to the fact that they refused to empty the war experience of adventure and romance. (One wonders why John Willett did not mention the one war novel which fits his case, Edlef Köppen's *Heeresbericht* [*Army Report*]. Certainly one of the most powerful of war novels, it was ignored at the time and is still almost unknown today because Köppen refused to transform war into a schoolboy adventure.)

The dialectic between the "new sobriety" and popular culture can clarify the problem facing this avant-garde: that it either had to abandon popularity in order to keep its stylistic integrity, or abandon its cool and impersonal approach in order to become popular. This might not have constituted a dilemma had the revolution succeeded and if, as Gropius hoped in 1919, the intellectual capacities of the general populace had been developed. But it was not to be, and those who did not abandon the experiment were driven into an ever greater elitism as well as an emphasis upon the

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mechanical, functional and even brutal aspects of their art.

Perhaps the architecture of the "new sobriety" has lasted so much longer than its now nearly forgotten music and art because it enabled governments, municipalities and corporations to seem progressive even while building expeditiously and inexpensively. In this the public was not consulted. What then of the linkage between the "new sobriety," freedom and democracy which Willett seeks to establish? These Weimar intellectuals did not hesitate to impose their vision of the good society upon a recalcitrant people.

The very excellence of this book makes one wish to know John Willett's opinions on these larger issues. Meanwhile, he has undoubtedly written one of the most informative and stimulating books on Weimar culture. It should be read not only by those interested in the past, but by those interested in our own society and environment as well.

George L. Mosse

George L. Mosse, Bascom Professor of History, University of Wisconsin, is the author of *Towards the Final Solution, A History of European Racism* (Howard Fertig) and *Nazism* (Transaction Books).

The Lion's Last Roar, Suez 1956
by Chester L. Cooper

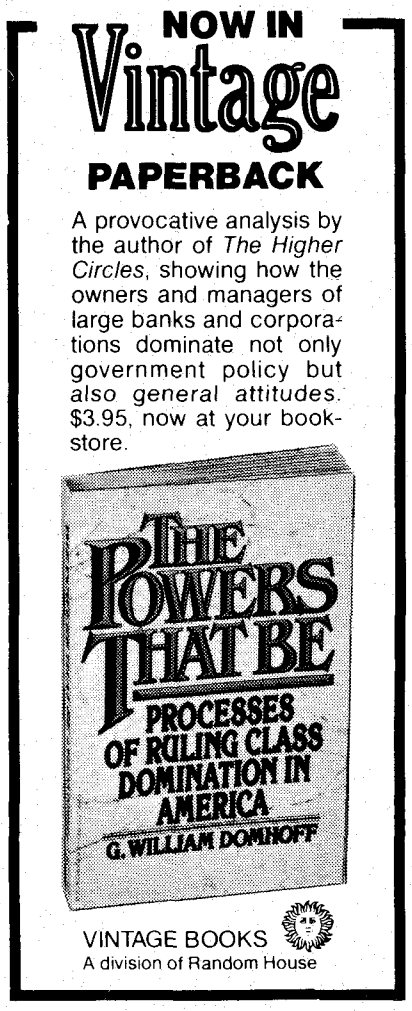
(Harper & Row; $12.95)

No other major power has more consistently chosen the wrong foreign policy in the postwar era than Great Britain. In 1945 Britain held the moral leadership of Europe in her hands but unwisely chose the "special relationship" with the United States and the Empire, then the Commonwealth, over the construction of a European community. In 1952 Britain refused to become a member of the European Coal and Steel Community; in 1954 Britain refused to participate in the proposed European Defense Community; even after Suez Britain refused to join the Common Market in 1957; and today Britain plays a role of "the bad European," leaving the major European initiatives to France and Germany, a durable entente which virtually nobody had anticipated.

The choices Britain made, however, were probably in the nature of things. Her perception of her power was reinforced by her heroic conduct during the Second World War. She emerged the victor and deserved the accolades she received. Paradoxically, not only was she treated with respect by her more powerful allies, America and Russia, but she was given more than her due. Washington perceived Britain as a postwar commercial rival: the harsh terms of the 1945 British loan were based in no small part on Washington's belief that the United States must break the imperial economic power of London. Moscow's withdrawal of support for the Greek Communists in the postwar Greek civil war was largely based on the belief that Britain would not allow Greece to fall into the hands of the Communist government. Even when the extent of British economic and military weakness became evident during the dreadful winter of 1947, when Britain turned over its responsibilities in the eastern Mediterranean to America, by and large the British cabinet thought that British power would soon be restored. It never was. And the ill-conceived Suez expedition exposed the hollowness of British perceptions and the fallacies of her postwar policies.

Chester L. Cooper's masterly retelling of the Suez affair not only exposes the weakness of Britain but also reveals the underlying US response toward allies whose interests do not always coincide with our own. Cooper was an observer and, in part, a participant in the Anglo-American quarrel over Suez. Posted to the American Embassy in London in 1955 to act as a liaison between the analytical intelligence services of the United States and Great Britain, he was as bewildered as his British counterparts by the deceptive, not to say deceitful, moves of both Secretary of State Dulles and Prime Minister Anthony Eden. Not only mistrust but active dislike—"that terrible man," as Eden termed Dulles—characterized the relationship between these two men temperamentally worlds apart.

Cooper plainly sympathizes with Eden, who mistook the Arab nationalist, Nasser, for another Hitler. In order, like so many statesmen, to avoid the mistakes of the past, Eden misread the lessons of the 1930s for the realities of the 1950s. A rapid overturning of the old imperial order by the nationalists of the third world was already well under way when Nasser seized the Suez Canal. In Nasser's case, however, Eden's problem seems to have been the arrogance of the Egyptian, the unwillingness of Egypt to let Britain lead the way into a new international order. To make things worse, Eden's perception that Washington would share his alarm over Nasser's illegal seizure of the Canal was not unreasonable, since the precipitating act came as a result of America's refusal to help finance the Aswan Dam. Though Washington was rightly upset by Nasser's behavior—his recognition of Communist China, his growing closeness to the USSR—Washington's cancellation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of negotiations over Aswan seemed dangerously abrupt; Britain was informed at the last possible moment.

Such behavior on the part of the Americans was a portent of things to come. As events unfolded, Dulles backed and filled, at times treating Nasser as a Communist stooge, at other times as an anti-colonialist nationalist. Finally, urged on by France's Premier Guy Mollet, whose desire to punish Nasser stemmed largely from his belief that Egyptian support for the Algerian rebels would dry up if Nasser was deposed, Eden went forward to plan a military attack on the Canal. The invasion was coordinated with an Israeli strike, though this collusion was to be masked from the public by the pretext of Anglo-French intervention "to save" the Canal from the presumed clash of Egyptian and Israeli forces. The attack succeeded and the Canal was occupied—but then, under American and Soviet pressure, the British and French troops withdrew without pushing forward to capture Cairo and depose Nasser. It was the Egyptian, not the Englishman, who survived.

What went wrong? Why did Eden lose his nerve? The answer lies partially with the state of Eden's health. More telling was the shock Eden received when Eisenhower broke with him over the issue. With an election pending and the Soviets invading Hungary, Eisenhower was not, contrary to the report of then Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold MacMillan, going to "lie doggo until the election period." Far from it: Eisenhower would run as a peace president, and if he had to take harsh measures, such as refusing to support the battered pound, so be it. Eden cracked. The British ordered a cease-fire, and the French, unable to carry on alone, were reluctantly forced to follow suit.

Suez was a turning point in US-European relations. By lining up with Moscow against its closest allies in the UN Security Council, the United States evoked the European nightmare that the two superpowers would act together against the interests of Europe. Yet London and Paris drew opposite conclusions. For Britain, it was crucial that the broken "special relationship" be repaired; for France, it was clear that she must proceed on an even more independent path, push ahead more quickly with an independent nuclear deterrent, and complete negotiations for a European Common Market that might some day become an entity strong enough to pursue a course different from that laid down by Washington. As Cooper tells it, on the very day of the Suez cease-fire, Germany's Chancellor Adenauer told Mollet that an integrated Europe would be "your revenge" on the United States. Assumptions that American and European interests converge would not be made again, and distrust of US motives would persist.

Ironically, according to Cooper, the absurd denouement may have resulted from a simple misunderstanding between Washington and London. A few weeks after the cease-fire, Dulles—with an absolutely straight face—asked the British ambassador and the foreign secretary, "Why did you stop at Suez?" A few months after that, he told the French foreign minister: "At Suez we were wrong. You are the ones who were right." Cooper explains that, in retrospect, it was "Eden's vacillation, not the possibility of invasion in Egypt [that was] really troubling Washington at that time."

So Eden lost his nerve because of Dulles and Eisenhower, not Nasser. But if he had carried on, would it have come out all that differently? Without Nasser, Egypt might have stayed within the Western camp—for a while. Today, however, that is exactly where Egypt is. The Soviets have been expelled. The French and British pursue a resolutely pro-Arab policy. Thus, the real lessons in Suez lie less in London's behavior toward an emerging pan-Arab Middle East than in the realm of US-European relations. Things have never been the same. Nor will they ever be again.

James Chace

James Chace, managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, is the author of *A World Elsewhere: The New American Foreign Policy* (Scribner's).

"THIS YEAR the IRS plans to save some $2 million by using the private United Parcel Service for its bulk packages of tax forms for accountants and other big users. Said an IRS spokesman, 'This is just more cost effective,' which is to say, cheaper. United Parcel's rates happened to be 38 per cent lower than the U.S. mails. Thoughts of Chairman Adam Smith, Number 901: When the ship begins to sink, join the rats."

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On Difficulty and Other Essays by George Steiner

(Oxford University Press; $10.95)

George Steiner's new book is a curious affair. It extends and deepens speculations introduced in earlier works, but it does so in a way that will seem difficult to challenge. This is curious because Steiner wants nothing more than to *be* challenged. A series of papers on what he calls "frontier" topics—languages and psychoanalysis, new conceptions of learning, the displacement of books by movies and popular music, and so on—, his essays are "explicitly provisional" and, in crucial aspects, incomplete. They formulate positions without claiming to have arrived at the truth or to know where next to turn. Readers will sense, on every page, an invitation to respond, to argue, to resist. But so nimble and alert to possibility is the critic's articulating voice that one will rather pay careful attention than resist. Ultimately, no doubt, "collaborative disagreement" may seem possible, but few will feel dismissive or ungrateful. To disagree with Steiner here is inevitably to take up some thought he has been good enough to provide and to make of it what he has not been ready to. No reader will fail to feel Steiner's encouragement as he moves out on his own.

This is not a matter of ordinary rhetorical strategy. The issues Steiner treats are large, and there is no sense in supposing that they will yield entirely to common sense or ordinary literary analysis. Steiner supposes that the best he can do is to ask questions and to suggest what answers might look like to those who share certain crucial assumptions. Primary among these are the

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following: that contemporary education, in the US especially, is a system of "organized amnesia"; that, as we actually master less and less, we come to believe we are in touch with the only things that matter, which are spontaneous impulses and raw "truths" untouched by imaginative exertion; that the erosion of the ability to read and to exercise imagination is closely related to the erosion of confidence in an interior self which can discourse silently about that which eludes explicit expression; and finally, that a culture which tries to make everything public, which refuses to preserve a vital human zone of silence and privacy will more and more destroy what is left of any meaningful freedoms.

This is a large order, and Steiner knows the risks involved. A critic of an earlier book by Steiner described it as working from "a theory so nebulously inclusive that it leaves no possibility for refutation. And a theory that can't be refuted can't be demonstrated." But Steiner's theories are always demonstrated, whatever his willingness to leave things "open" to subsequent correction or, at least, amplification. The risk is that, because they are audaciously inclusive, his theories will be thought nebulous and irresponsible by those who typically mistrust theory and are comfortable within self-containing disciplines. The reader of Steiner's paper on "Eros and Idiom" will find one demonstration after another of a very elusive thesis, but he will not feel that Steiner has come across with all there is to say. A book that sets out topics without trying to exhaust them will wish to demonstrate only that certain positions are defensible and that often received wisdom on such topics is distinctly unreliable. To note of George Eliot that she knows more than she feels called upon to say is to point to something that can be shown quite easily in references to a text. It is less easy to demonstrate that what she says derives "an unmistakable authority" from all that she withholds. To go one step further and contend that "in most instances what passes for characteristic post-Freudian insight is, by comparison, shallow" is to step beyond the conclusively demonstrable. Ultimately, Steiner appeals to us as people who are willing to try a thought before rejecting it. He risks "getting things wrong," as he says, so that we may learn with him to ask questions.

The papers in *On Difficulty* are the papers of a literary man. Steiner moves comfortably around and within the specialized vocabularies of psychoanalysis and linguistic "science," to name but two, but always he engages the central issues in the spirit of a literary critic in love with texts and the mysteries they propose. The title essay is a characteristic performance. There are, Steiner argues, different kinds of difficulty we confront in poems. Some of these we may resolve by looking up a word or tracking down a source. Others will yield slowly to the careful reader who abides with the difficulty patiently, willing to persist for a while at the level of "blurred apprehension." But Steiner is also interested in a poetry "we are not meant to understand at all," or only very little, a poetry whose unspoken "interior statement" is resistant to interpretation and to translation. Such a poetry creates an "intricate equilibrium between utterance and the unsaid." Anyone who has read the work of the German poet Hölderlin will know what Steiner means when he contends that some of the most wonderful things can't be looked up, and that we violate the spirit of poetry by insisting that everything important be spoken.

For Steiner, difficulty is very much what life in culture is all about, and the refusal of the difficult is in many ways the refusal of our humanity. Final solutions are terrible not only because they may produce suffering but because they are based upon an awful lie: that human beings and their creations are simple. Steiner's case for difficulty in poetry is carefully tied to his observations on the politics of culture. What happens to people who become less and less able to negotiate difficulty, who are conditioned not to think about anything they cannot handle comfortably and intuitively? That is what Steiner wants to know. If it is true that college and graduate students know less and less; that they remember little of what they read; that they have not the capacity to follow or to recognize references to an Old Testament legend or to Homeric myth—how then may they be said to read at all? When it is necessary for a student (or his instructor) to depend more and more on footnote and glossary apparatuses, and even then to feel that he is missing half of what he ought to grasp, how is he to "answer" the text before him with the confidence of a true reader? In a cinematic culture, in which most things are made instantly palpable and sensations may be evoked with lurid immediacy, the mind grows impatient with mediation. It wants the thing itself or nothing, and it will feel that only what is shown or said in so many words is worth having. For Steiner the cultivation of difficulty in poetry is part of a larger refusal to accept the externalization of discourse promoted by a liberationist culture.

On Difficulty, as indicated, extends insights developed in Steiner's earlier books. In the key essays of *Language and Silence* (1967) he wondered how our habits of reading and of feeling would be affected by the introduction into ordinary discourse of the language of pornography. Would our sense of ourselves change drastically as we came increasingly to subject our own private imaginings and erotic flights to the linguistic conventions of a "literature" more and more available and relentlessly intrusive? Would there remain anything we could call our own, anything not irrevocably tainted by the "knowing" purveyors of the myth of apocalyptic orgasm? In his major work, *After Babel* (1975), Steiner speculated that language orginates in and has greatest intensity at the level of silent communing with oneself or with one's god; that it remains rich as a medium of communication among intimate relations; and that it thins out as it is forced to serve communication with aliens and potential enemies who are not privy to unarticulated conventions available within the speaker's tightly contained linguistic "circle." Thus we have a progressive movement of "original" language into circumlocution and, ultimately, into a tacit shorthand in which speaker and auditor intuitively accept that what is spoken is only partly what is meant, though it may serve the purposes of ordinary communication decently enough.

The emphasis on privacy, on the uses of concealment and the "autonomous energies of inward diction," is as appealing in the new book as it has ever been. Steiner poses, at last, the most telling of questions in a way that is somehow both disarming and encouraging. Do we want, really, to be free to say and to listen to anything at all? Is there not, in the freedoms we currently enjoy, a

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certain amount of "bullying" which makes us feel we may not withhold or shut ourselves off to anything? Is it possible that texts containing the deepest truths of which human beings are capable must remain forever closed to those who have no respect for what is genuinely unsayable and neither the capacity nor appetite "to discriminate . . . between the necessary and the factitious, and even between 'the real' and the 'more real'"? Any reader who doubts that demonstration is possible where such theories are concerned is directed to the long study of "Eros and Idiom" in the new book. If he cannot understand, from Steiner's comparative analysis of passages of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Flaubert, Zola, Genet and others, what Steiner has been working so brilliantly to tell us for almost 20 years, there is no hope for him. Of such a reader we may justly say that he does not wish to understand.

Robert Boyers

Robert Boyers is editor of the quarterly *Salmagundi* and professor of English at Skidmore College. His most recent book, on the English critic F.R. Leavis, has just been published by University of Missouri Press.

Levi's
by Ed Cray

(Houghton Mifflin; $9.95)

King C. Gillette: The Man and His Wonderful Shaving Device
by Russell B. Adams Jr.

(Little, Brown; $10)

The Instant Image: Edwin Land and the Polaroid Experience
by Mark Olshaker

(Stein and Day; $10)

What we have here are business biographies of a familiar kind—journalistic accounts of three successful American manufacturing firms, the men who founded them and, in the first two cases, the succeeding generations of managers who kept them alive and growing. Anyone familiar with *Fortune* magazine will recognize the genre, even in this extended form. Like *Fortune*'s business profiles, these books finesse vexing questions of historical causality by ignoring them or explaining them in terms of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc,* and set their stories in a thin context, pasted together from quickie research in standard textbooks.

Each of these books charts the rise of a single firm from modest beginnings to impressive corporate size. Levi Strauss, founded in 1853, ranked 160th among American industrials in 1978; Gillette (1902) ranked 157th, and Polaroid (1932) stood 230th. Each firm owed its beginning to the driving force of a single individual, a fact that points to the continued efficacy of entrepreneurship in American business.

Taken together, these stories show that there has been more than one way to succeed in American manufacturing. At the firms' inception, the controlling ownership of all three of them lay in the hands of a single individual or family. Levi's and Polaroid have stayed that way, while Gillette's ownership underwent the transition common to most big American firms, becoming more diffuse with the passage of time. The extended family that owns Levi Strauss has also provided its top management from the beginning; but the founder of Gillette, King Camp Gillette, soon found himself shunted to the sidelines as his company's management passed into the hands of a hired bureaucracy. At Polaroid, Edwin Land was and is the top management and has only recently relinquished a measure of control to an associate.

Levi Strauss manufactures a technologically simple product by a process that remains nearly as primitive as it was at the outset, whereas Gillette's simple products require complex manufacturing methods. (Polaroid is sophisticated on both counts.) Levi's confines its research and development efforts largely to the volatile market produced by whimsical consumer tastes in apparel. Gillette combines market research with the quest for sharper blades, better handles to hold them, and more effective ways of suppressing unpleasant bodily effusions. Polaroid, of course, has prospered by staying on the cutting edge of applied technology.

Each firm has a somewhat diversified product line, but has added to its repertoire in keeping with the philosophy of its founder, rather than wandering far afield. Levi's sticks to making clothing; the backbone of the company's business remains that durable pair of pants. Gillette still favors consumer products (razors, shaving cream, ballpoint pens, disposable lighters, deodorants, home permanents) that get used up and thrown away, a principle King Gillette embraced while working as a bottle cap salesman. Polaroid's wares—sunglasses and all those boons to the home pornography industry—reflect Land's belief that advanced technology can be translated into products for which a mass consumer market exists.

Advertising, as we know only too well, plays a major role in the marketing strategies of all three firms, as does their emphasis on quality products. Although each firm has come up with an occasional clinker, it is generally true that where Levi's, Gillette and Polaroid are concerned, what you see is what you get.

The Gillette story, as I have implied above, follows along more or less conventional lines of American big business growth. The other two present some interesting exceptions. Levi's began as a dry goods and clothing jobbing house, then went into manufacturing when a Jewish immigrant tailor wandered in from the Nevada desert (of all places) carrying a pair of pants of his own design, made of heavy denim and riveted at the stress points, ideal for the rough wear demanded by miners and ranch hands. Mercantile houses often financed manufacturing ventures, but rarely engaged in it themselves as Levi's

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did. The company's long-term survival as both family owned and family managed also puts it in a select circle among big American firms. Its success has stemmed as much from good luck as good judgment. Although it has expended great sums on market research, its most spectacular growth came as a result of changing consumer tastes, which made blue jeans *the* thing to wear across a wide spectrum of American society, a shift in taste that Levi's had little to do with, but which meant that the company found itself, as Sam Rayburn once described a friend of his, "Playing the bass tuba the day it rained gold."

Edwin Land himself is a phenomenon. That a company could grow so large and prosper so mightily making technologically arcane products while being totally dominated by the will of a single man, flies in the face of the accumulated wisdom about the evolution of business institutions in capitalist economies. Land's success furnishes welcome support to the beleaguered advocates of the continued relevance of the entrepreneur in business and the individualist in society. And Land is nothing if not an individualist. Among the firms explored by these books, only Land and his company refused to let the author get past the PR man into the corporate innards.

These are interesting books, as far as they go. Each tells a first-rate story, but none says much about the relation between American business and society. There are some interesting personal details: for example, Levi Strauss's sister kept him supplied with married women, thus pacifying him sexually while keeping the ownership of her bachelor brother's business in the hands of her own children. King Gillette was a crackpot social philosopher of the Ignatius Donnelly stripe and expounded his views in three of the most ponderous tomes ever to find their way into print. None of these books, however, pushes past the anecdotal level to speculate on why these men behaved as they did, or what set them apart from their fellows. Perhaps it's just as well; if journalists did all these things, I'm not sure what would be left for the historians.

Harold C. Livesay

Harold C. Livesay is professor of history at SUNY, Binghamton, and the author of *Andrew Carnegie and the Rise of Big Business* and *Samuel Gompers and Organized Labor in America*, both published by Little, Brown.

Brief Reviews

Boarding Party by James Leasor

(Houghton Mifflin; $8.95)

Take an auxiliary cavalry regiment of the Indian Army in 1942: The Calcutta Light Horse, established by none other than Robert Clive in 1759. By the 1940s most of its members—businessmen, accountants, stockbrokers—had joined for one of two reasons. They wanted the use of the Light Horse clubhouse—it was not for nothing that the regiment was affectionately known as the Calcutta *Tight* Horse—and they wanted the Indian government to subsidize the upkeep of their horses. This the Indian government was willing to do, even in the 1940s, in the belief that the cavalry might yet have to be called into action.

Take then the fact that in 1942 German U-boats in the Indian Ocean begin to sink allied merchant ships with deadly accuracy, surfacing at a given moment, finding the merchantman in their range, torpedoing it and then diving to safety below the waves. British Intelligence found that the U-boats were being directed by detailed information that was being transmitted from one of three German merchant ships which had taken refuge in the main harbor of Goa. The transmitter had to be put out of action if the appalling loss of allied ships was to be stopped. But Goa was Portuguese, and Portuguese neutrality was essential to the allied cause, and so could not be violated.

What to do? Why, call in some irregulars, whom the Indian government would disown if they were discovered. The task was given to the Light Horse. (One of them suggested, when he heard that they would be going to sea, that they be called the Calcutta Light Sea Horse.) So little more than a handful of middle-aged businessmen set out on an amazing adventure to the other side of India, and complete their mission with unqualified success and panache and some riotousness. Only now has it been possible to tell the story, and James Leasor has made a thoroughly good yarn of it. This is adventure of a high order, and adventure typical of the British Empire, which was in large measure created and sustained by irregulars.

Read it as a yarn, and you will not regret the $8.95. But there is much else in the margins. The noises and smells of India come to life—the cross-country railway journey, for example—and the still unbelievably patronizing attitude of the British raj to the Indians, as in the common Calcutta remark that "Bengal is a low-lying country, full of low, lying people." The politicians of the Congress party, who were in open rebellion against the British at the time, were scoffingly dismissed as "Congress wallahs." But we cannot blame people for sharing the common attitudes of their time. And what remains at the end is an unforced delight in the wholly individualistic characters and tempers of the men of the Calcutta Light Horse. It was the last action of the regiment before it was disbanded after India was ceded its independence. That they should have had to go to sea in a barely seaworthy tub, and sink one German ship, and force the others to scuttle themselves, is part of the eccentric history of the British Empire, of India itself whose officers in the Indian Army sent a moving farewell to their British comrades in 1948, and of course of the Second World War in which such irregular actions redeemed the awfulness of modern warfare.

H.F.

The Short-Timers by Gustav Hasford

(Harper & Row; $8.95)

Death is the subject of this Vietnam War novel. It is 154 pages long, and on what feels like 150 of those pages there are bloody and artistically implausible killings administered by whatever means of obliteration Gustav Hasford's obsessed imagination can contrive. That, unfortunately, is all Hasford's imagination can do. His characters—they have nicknames like "T.H.E. Rock" and "Mr. Payback"; the narrator is a certain "Joker"—are mere targets; and his story, which involves Joker's reluctance to take command of his squad (would you want to head a squad with T.H.E. Rock in it?), has neither impelling force nor unfolding logic. Will the next victim get it in the eye or the groin? Will it be a Marine run over by a water buffalo or a hapless Vietnamese farmer shot from a helicopter gun-ship? That is the only kind of narrative expectancy—there is no

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suspense—Hasford builds up. One reads on from morbid motives only.

Mr. Hasford was a combat reporter in Vietnam, and this novel is clearly his way of discharging some very painful memories. *The Short-Timers* may be an effective purgation, but as a novel it not only fails to move but to interest. Death, so obsessively meted out, becomes a bore.

Out of sympathy for Hasford's palpable pain, tender-hearted critics will be tempted to praise *The Short-Timers*. If they do, watch out for the old imitative fallacy in its immediately plausible guise. Vietnam, their apology is likely to go, was a body count war—that is, a war in which the sole military objective was death. In making his novel a chronicle of death, Hasford has thus created a fictional model which reflects the *truth* about Vietnam. The trouble with this logic is that Hasford's model is so meagerly imagined. The tragedy of the war was that it destroyed full human beings with psyches torn by conflicting loyalties and fears, not the mannequins Hasford offers us, spouting their Spartan dialogue, enacting the Marine cult of cruelty and silence and dying their cardboard deaths, unmourned, unmissed.

J.B.

Correction

We regret omitting the name of the co-author of *Amoskeag* (Pantheon) in *TNR*'s December 23 & 30 review of the book; he is Randolph Langebach.

Correspondence, *from page 8*

airports close, light plane pilots have no place to go but the munis.

There is some relief in *TNR*'s well-okay-but-don't-encourage-'em, benign-neglect Final Solution (stop me if I'm wrong, but that sounds like Make Flying too Expensive to be Attractive). It would reduce the number of general aircraft; but the causative effect would be inconsistent with what I imagine *TNR* considers its egalitarian instincts. You could easily ground bugsmushers like me; it would leave the skies that much safer for the heavy jets, but also for the vice presidents for marketing, the CEOs, the COOs and John Travolta.

Jeff Millar
Houston, Texas

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Washington Diarist

The Day the Music Died

A few months back I sat down to watch a three-hour television special consisting of films from two of Elvis Presley's last concerts. I meant to watch the entire show, but after half an hour I had to turn it off. It was no pretty sight. The face was fat and dull-eyed, the body practically immobile, the voice mechanical. Take away the once-scandalous gyrations and the inimitable voice, and what was there? Elvis never wrote anything to speak of, never contributed any real innovations after his burst on the musical scene. He was the King only because he was the first rock star, not because he was the best. His persistent popularity owes more to commercial hype than to his own talent. All I could think was, "He was no Buddy Holly."

Holly, who died in a plane crash 20 years ago next week, is my own nominee for the title Elvis never deserved. It wasn't for nothing that folksinger Don McLean memorialized February 3, 1959 as "the day the music died." It didn't die, of course, as rock's growth over the last two decades attests. But to imagine the development of rock music without Holly's contributions is almost impossible. Holly has languished in relative obscurity for these 20 years, although Gary Busey's thrilling portrayal of him in last year's film biography revived some interest in his music. He always has had a special following among rock musicians, particularly during the 1960s. Buddy Holly was far and away the strongest influence on the Beatles, who chose their name as a reference to Holly's own band, the Crickets. One of the Rolling Stones's first hits was Holly's innovative "Not Fade Away." The Hollies were named after him. Holly influenced the music of many others. If Elvis was the first rocker, Holly was the mastermind of the rock revolution. The range of his innovations is unparalleled in rock music history. He was the first to use only a four-piece band, which became the standard setup in the 1960s. He was the first to overdub his own voice on his records. He was the first to use strings on a rock record. And on and on. He drew on an astonishing variety of musical forms. He suffered, though, from being more interested in music than in self-promotion. Holly probably had more influence on the evolution of rock music than anyone. But in the US he never even had a number-one record.

The Rolling Stones were rock's original bad boys, the ones you wouldn't want your daughter to bring home, and they always have taken some delight in trying to shock. Most of their efforts have been pretty harmless, but some have been purely despicable. A few years back the Stones drew some well-deserved criticism from feminist groups for their album "Black and Blue," which celebrated sadomasochism, and in particular for a billboard ad featuring a bruised and bloody woman. More recently the Reverend Jesse Jackson has castigated the Stones for a line in a song on their latest album, "Some Girls," which alleges that "black girls just want to fuck all night." Ten years ago, when white liberals still worried about the civil rights movement, that line would have been seen for the dangerous racist slur it is, instead of being ignored or dismissed as a harmless jest. If there are any organized boycotts of the Rolling Stones, I haven't heard about them.

If TNR ever decides to close up shop because of financial losses—not likely, since we've been losing money for more than 60 years now—I hope it does so with more grace than *New Times*. I don't like to see other magazines go under, since we writers, at least, need all the magazines we can get, but I regret *New Times*'s departure less than most. Occasionally it featured a couple of interesting, well-researched, carefully thought-out articles, but mostly it was shallow, flashy and predictable. Its readers were generally young, white and affluent, and *New Times* rarely challenged their preconceptions about the world. The magazine was more trendy than seriously left-wing, as demonstrated by its extravagant emphasis on environmental issues. The editors of *New Times* used their farewell issue, not to ponder whatever of their own failures might be to blame, but to assail Americans for not buying their publication. Its demise, they said, was due to the rampant "decadence" of the "Me Decade." They are deluding themselves. *New Times* owed what success it enjoyed almost entirely to that decadence. The problem with *New Times* was not, as the editors said, that it was too serious. It was that, in a trivial age, it was not quite trivial enough.

Another magazine to which I wish a speedy death recently celebrated an anniversary with a gala party here in Washington, attended by sycophants from the local news media. Hugh Hefner and *Playboy* have been degrading and exploiting women for 25 years now. No fewer than 800 people, including senators, White House aides and the mayor, turned out to ogle assorted Playmates and hail this gilt-edged pornographer as a cultural pioneer. I never fully grasped the extent of that degradation until the time I watched a man in a drugstore buying copies of *Playboy* and a couple of other girlie magazines, oblivious or indifferent to the stares of his two daughters, neither of whom was older than 10. I was flabbergasted, wondering what sort of example he thought he was suggesting to them. Hefner naturally denies that his magazine oppresses women. The message it offers a woman, he told one reporter, is that she can be anything she wants, from a secretary to a college professor. But what his magazine actually suggests is that your job isn't important at all. What's important, if you're a woman, is that you have a 36-inch bustline and a casual attitude about sex: that way lies happiness and self-fulfillment. Naturally I'm opposed to censorship. But I think that the world would be a better place if 10-year-old girls weren't led to believe that a woman's highest vocation is to cavort naked in front of a camera.

Buddy Holly's songs perfectly reflected the times in which he lived. They are simple love songs—playful, innocent, painfully sincere, devoid of any trace of political awareness. It's easy for disillusioned children of the 1970s to dismiss the 1950s as complacent, self-satisfied and unimaginative. Americans were much less politicized then; from our vantage point their lives may look somewhat pointless. Actually the Americans of the 1950s were probably too busy with the important things in life that Holly sang about to worry so much about politics. Is that so bad? Samuel Johnson said, "How small of all that human hearts endure, that part which laws or kings can cause or cure!" Contemporary Americans seem to have forgotten that. Jill Robinson, for example, recently wrote in *The New York Times*, "I do not remember the date of my last wedding. But I remember the dates the Kennedys died, the date Martin Luther King died." Anyone who thinks the death of a public figure is more important in the cosmic scheme of things than a spiritual and physical union between a man and a woman has totally lost her sense of balance. A few Holly records might help Robinson regain it.

S.C.

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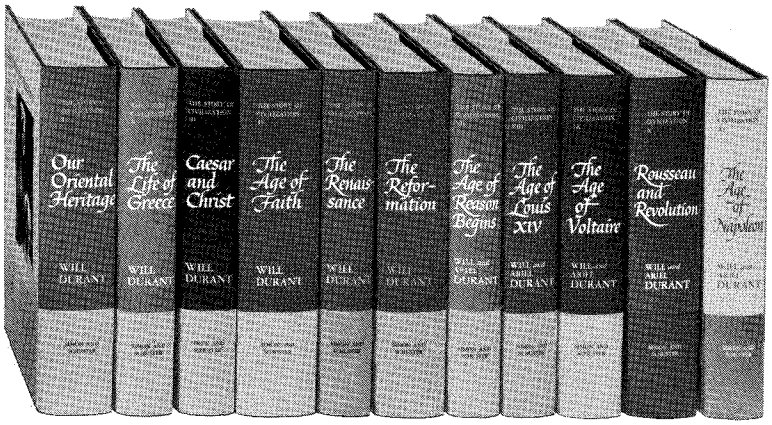

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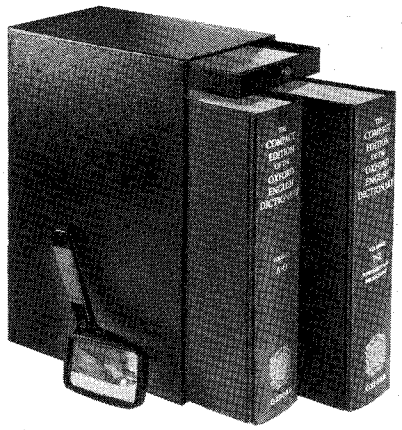

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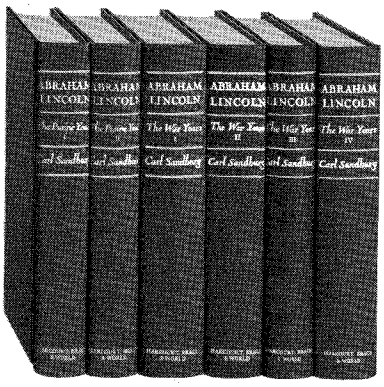

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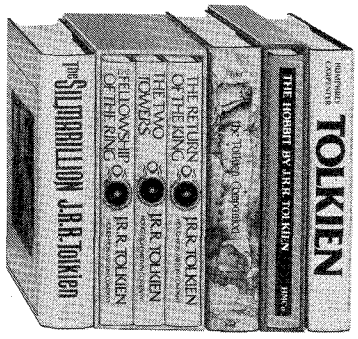
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